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A

TRUE AND COMPLETE

PORTRAITURE OF METHODISM;

OR THE HISTORY OF THE

WESLEYAN METHODISTS:

INCLUDING

THEIR RISE, PROGRESS, AND PRESENT STATE: THE LIVES AND CHARACTERS OF DIVERS OF THEIR MINISTERS: THE DOCTRINES THE METHODISTS BELIEVE AND TEACH, FULLY AND EXPLICITLY STATED:

WITH

THE WHOLE PLAN OF THEIR DISCIPLINE.

THE DIFFERENT COLLECTIONS

Made among them, and the application of the monies raised thereby;

AND A DESCRIPTION OF

CLASS-MEETINGS, BANDS, LOVE-FEASTS, &c.

ALSO,

A DEFENCE OF METHODISM, &c.

BY JONATHAN CROWTHER,

Who has been more than 31 years a member, and above 26 years a Travelling Preacher among them.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

Some Interesting Documents

RESPECTING THE EXTENSION OF THEIR RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGES, BY A LATE ACT OF THE BRITISH LEGISLATURE.

New-York:

PUBLISHED BY DANIEL HITT AND THOMAS WARE, FOR THE METHODIST CONNEXION IN THE UNITED STATES.

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PREFACE.

It appears to me that a book resembling this is greatly wanted. Many talk, and some write about the Methodists, without properly understanding the subject.—Some wish for clear specific information upon it, but cannot obtain this, without reading more books than their time will admit of.

Many members of our Societies know very little of our history, have very imperfect ideas of our doctrines, and are still more ignorant respecting some parts of our discipline.

It is of importance that our friends, and even our enemies, should be able to procure a book, and that as cheap and portable as possible, which may serve as a book of reference, containing a true, clear, and full account, of a people who have attracted so much public attention, and who have been so variously represented.

I have not, knowingly, misrepresented any thing which I have treated upon. And my sources of information have been the very best.

The idea I have formed of the necessity, and general utility of such a Work, makes me wonder that no person has published one upon the same plan long before this time. The purchasers may rest assured, that this Portraiture shall be so complete as not to disappoint any reasonable expectation. I wish to do good: and may God assist and succeed my well-meant endeavours.

But, whatever may be my motives for publishing this Work, or whatever may be the execution of it, I am not to expect that I shall escape the general lot of authors. With, or without reason, objections will be rais-

ed. "Yes," says one, "the Defence of Methodism, especially, is ill timed." But is not this objection as ill timed? and without foundation too? If ever it be seasonable for people to defend themslves, it is when slanders and misrepresentations are multiplied; and when a storm of persecution is apparently gathering. It would indeed be ill-timed to sound an alarm of danger before there is any just grounds of apprehension: and equally ill-timed when it is blown over, or has so far advanced that it cannot be averted. In old times, it was when danger was approaching, and while it might possibly be averted, that God's watchmen blew the trumpet in Zion, and sounded a solemn alarm. I think the last chapter of this book "*A word in season*"

I have said enough towards the conclusion of this performance, to convince the reader that I think too highly of the king, and have too much confidence in his goodness, to apprehend any danger from him.—Methodism, Toleration, &c. are public matters, and matters of general concern. As such, I think every man has a right to deliver his sentiments upon them, and that in the freest and fullest manner. This must be the privilege of those who are particularly interested.

I shall only add, that this Work is solely my own personal undertaking; and that no man, or number of men, have employed me in it. And, having made this avowal it will then be quite unnecessary for any man, or number of men, to disavow any thing contained in it. I seek not, nor ever did, the patronage or protection of any person. But men of integrity, and even God himself, will *avow* the truth, at the great decisive day.

J. CROWTHER.

HALIFAX, *April* 4, 1811.

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A

TRUE AND COMPLETE

PORTRAITURE OF METHODISM.

CHAPTER I.

A SHORT HISTORY OF METHODISM.

THE father and founder of Methodism was the Rev. JOHN WESLEY. He was the son of the Rev. Samuel Wesley, Rector of Epworth, in Lincolnshire; and was born the 17th of June, old stile, in the year 1703. I have heard him say, that he was baptized by the name of John Benjamin; that his mother had burried two sons, one called John and the other Benjamin, and that she united their names in him. But he never made use of the second name.

Many persons will be gratified with some account of Mr. Wesley's ancestors. And as far as any account of the family can be traced back, it appears they were conspicuous for piety, and respectable on account of their learning. Bartholomew Wesley, Mr. John Wesley's great Grandfather, was educated at one of our universities, and afterwards held the living of Allington, in Dorsetshire. Along with near two thousand other worthy clergyman, he was ejected by the act of Uniformity, in 1662. He studied physic at the university, as well as divinity: a practice which had been frequent, and which was not then fallen wholly into disuse. He preached occasionally after his ejectment, but applied himself chiefly to the practice of physic. He had a son, called John, who died before him, and whose death expedited his own. John Wesley, of whom I am now speaking, studied at Oxford, and took the degree of Master of Arts. There are no certain accounts of the time of his death, or of his age at that time. He was a person of early

and exemplary piety. He began to preach when twenty-two years old, and was fixed at Whitchurch, in Dorsetshire, in 1658. After the Restoration, some persons gave him much trouble, because he would not read the book of Common Prayer. They made heavy complaints of him to the Bishop of Bristol. Mr. Wesley waited on him, when an interesting conversation took place, which Calamy published, and which the late Mr. Wesley has inserted in his Journal. The Bishop was so far satisfied, as to assure him he would not meddle with him. However, he had enemies, who seized him on the Lord's-day in the beginning of 1662, before the act of Uniformity could eject him, and he was committed to prison at Blandford. He was soon liberated from confinement, But yet bound over to appear at the next assizes, where he came off better than he expected. God raised him up several friends, inclined a solicitor to plead for him, and so restrained the wrath of man, that the judge, though a very passionate man, did not say an angry word.

After this he preached every Lord's-day, till August 17, when he delivered his farewell sermon, to a weeping audience, from Acts xx. 32. October the 26th, the place was declared vacant. On the 22d of February, 1663, he removed to Melcomb: but the corporation made an order against his settlement there, imposing a fine of 20l. upon his landlady, and 5s. per week upon him, to be levied by distress. He went next to Bridgewater, and then to Ilminster and Taunton, where he met with great kindness from the several denominations, and had frequent opportunities of preaching. And here he got many friends, who were afterwards very kind to him and his numerous family. A gentleman allowed him to live rent free, in a house at Preston, two or three miles from Melcomb. He went to it with his family in the beginning of May, and continued to live there till he died. He had thoughts of going to America, but determined to remain in his native land. A number of serious people at Pool gave him a call to be their pastor; in which situation he continued to the day of his death. The Oxford act compelled him to withdraw for a season from his family at Preston, and from his charge at Pool. But he preached wherever he came, if he could get a congregation. And after some time

he returned home, and renewed his labours in the ministry. But he was often disturbed; several times apprehended, and four times imprisoned; once at Pool, for half a year; once at Dorchester, for three months: the other confinements were shorter. He was in many straits and difficulties, but was wonderfully supported and delivered. It is supposed that he died about the year 1670. But the vicar of Preston would not suffer him to be burried in the church.

From the grandfather of the late Mr. Wesley, on the father's side, we may turn to his grandfather on the mother's side, who was the Rev. Samuel Annesley, LL. D. He was born at Killingworth, near Warwick, 1620, of religious parents, and was their only child. It has been said, that he was the first cousin to the Earl of Anglesey. In his infancy he was strongly impressed with thoughts of being a minister, for which his parents intended him from his birth. And when about five or six years old, he began a practice, which he continued afterwards, of reading twenty chapters in the Bible every day.

He lost his father when he was only four years old. But his mother took care of his education, and had considerable property to enable her so to do. At the age of fifteen he went to the University at Oxford, and took his degrees in the usual course. His piety and diligence attracted considerable notice while at Oxford. In 1644, he was ordained as chaplain of the ship called the Globe, under the earl of Warwick, then Lord High Admiral of England. He went to sea with the fleet, but not liking it, he quit it, and settled at Cliff, in Kent. But he met with great opposition. His predecessor had been displaced for associating with the people on the Lord's-day to drink, dance, &c. Such a people naturally loved such a minister. They rose upon Dr. Annesley with spits, forks, and stones, and threatened to kill him. But he was firm, and resolved to stay with them, till God had prepared them by his labours to receive a good successor. He lived as he ought, and laboured hard; and in a few years the people were greatly reformed, and became exceedingly fond of him. But a signal providence directed him to a settlement in London, 1652, by the unanimous choice of the inhabitants of the parish of St. John the Apostle. Soon after he was made lecturer

of St. Paul's, and in the year 1658, the parish of Cripplegate was favoured with his settlement there.

He was a man of great integrity and disinterestedness. He was displaced from his lecture, because he would not comply with some things he thought to be wrong. All parties acknowledged him to be *an Israelite indeed.* But he suffered much for nonconformity: and such was the persecuting party-spirit, that an angel from heaven would have been persecuted, had he been a Dissenter. In his sufferings God often appeared remarkably for him, and one person was struck dead while signing a warrant to apprehend him.

As a minister, his labours were abundant. His sermons were instructive and affecting, and he spoke from the heart. And, in some degree, the care of all the churches was upon him. He was very useful in getting good and useful ministers to such places as wanted them. He was sometimes the chief, and in sundry instances, the sole instrument in the education, as well as the subsistence of young ministers. And innumerable were the instances in which he visited and relieved the fatherless and the widows in their affliction. He was enabled to say upon his death-bed, "Blessed be God, I can say, I have been faithful in the ministry above fifty-five years." He had enjoyed a constant peace within, and an assurance of God's favour to him, for more than thirty years! and this was not in the least clouded in his last illness. He died full of peace, praise, and joyful hope.

Mr. John Wesley, of whom we have spoken before, left two sons, Matthew and Samuel; of the rest of his children we have no account. Persecution having greatly reduced the family, these two brothers must have experienced difficulties; but their industry surmounted all obstructions, and they rose to useful and respectable situations in life. Matthew followed the example of his grandfather, in studying physic; and by his medical practice acquired a handsome fortune. Samuel, the father of the late Mr. John Wesley, was born about 1662, or, probably a little before that time. It is thought he could not be more than eight or nine years old when his father died. His attachment to the Dissenters was first shaken by a defence of the death

of Charles the First, and the proceedings of the Calf's Head Club. These things shocked him. Yet it is certain, that the major part of the Dissenters disapproved of them as much as he did. After spending some time at a private academy, when sixteen years of age, he walked to Oxford, and entered himself of Exeter College. He possessed no more money than 2*l.* 16*s.* nor any prospect of future supplies, except from his own exertions. Probably by assisting the younger students, and instructing those who chose to employ him, he supported himself till he took his Bachelor's degree, without any other assistance, except a present of five shillings. He increased his stock to 10*l.* 15*s.* went to London, was ordained deacon, and obtained a curacy. A year after he was made chaplain on board the fleet. After filling this situation for one year only, he returned to London, and was a curate for two years. During this period he married, and had a son born. And he wrote several pieces, which brought him into notice and esteem. A small living was given him in the country; and the friends of King James promised him preferment, if he would comply with the king's desire, in supporting measures in favour of popery. But he absolutely refused to read the king's declaration in favour of popery; and though surrounded with courtiers, soldiers, and informers, he preached a bold and pointed discourse against it, from Dan. iii. 17, 18. He most cordially approved of the Revolution of 1688, and was the first who wrote in defence of it. This work he dedicated to Queen Mary, consort of William the Third. She presented him to the living of Epworth, in Lincolnshire, about the year 1693; and in 1723, the living of Wroote was given him in addition. He held the living of Epworth more than forty years; and had Queen Mary lived much longer, it is probable he would have had some more conspicuous situation, for which he was amply qualified. He was a constant preacher, a diligent visitor of the sick, and carefully watched over all who were committed to his care. But this did not divert him from literary pursuits; and his most favourite study was the holy scriptures. He wrote a commentary, in Latin, on the book of Job, and many

other things. He was possessed of considerable poetic talents: but, what is far more important, he was a man of genuine piety; and was firmly attached to justice, mercy, and truth. His integrity was conspicuous, and his conduct uniform, and that in various trying situations in life. And when his sons, John and Charles, were pursuing a course of piety at Oxford, which would apparently militate against their preferment, he encouraged them to go on, wishing them to make Moses's choice, Heb. xi. 25. Though he had but a small income for a large family, yet still he had always something to give to the needy. In conversation he was grave, yet instructive, lively and full of anecdote, and this talent his son John possessed in a very high degree. In his last moments, he displayed much resignation and fortitude. He appeared full of faith, peace, and steadfast hope. He was free from the fear of death, and desired his children about him, to let him hear them talk of heaven.

Mrs. Susannah Wesley, the mother of the late Mr. John Wesley, was the youngest daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley, and a few years younger than her husband. She was trained up in the doctrine and discipline of the Lord, and was early under religious impressions: she searched into the evidences of religion, and examined the controversy between the Dissenters and the established Church; and displayed a great concern for the instruction and welfare of her children. She was a woman truly devout. About the year 1700, she made a resolution to spend one hour, morning and evening, in private prayer and meditation. And this resolution she sacredly kept ever after, except when sickness prevented, or something absolutely indispensable obliged her to shorten the time. And when opportunity offered, she some times spent a little time in these exercises at noon also. At those seasons she often wrote down her thoughts on different religious subjects. Meantime she was very diligent in business, and exceedingly attentive to the concerns of her family. All her employments were well arranged, by which she saved much time, and kept her mind from distraction and perplexity. She had no fewer than nineteen children;

and ten of these, at least, grew up to be educated; they all received the first parts of their learning from her; and, probably, they could not have had a better instructor: disapproving of the common methods of governing and instructing youth, she adopted others which she thought more rational. Every thing, their rising and going to bed; their dressing, eating, and exercise; were all regulated by rule, except in case of sickness. They were early impressed with the propriety of entire obedience to their parents. As soon as they could speak, they were taught the Lord's prayer, and to repeat it at going to, and rising out of bed; and as they grew older, they were taught to pray in a larger way. She made it a rule, never to attempt to teach them to read, till they were five years old. As soon as they knew their letters, they were first put to spell, and read one line; and then a verse; always taking care to be perfect in their lesson, as they went on.

Mrs. Wesley ever discharged the duties of a wife, and a mother, with the greatest punctuality and diligence. The letters she wrote to her sons, when they were at college at Oxford, give a very favourable view, both of her piety and knowledge. But though a woman of piety, she had not a clear idea of justification by faith, and the direct witness of the Spirit, till near her latter end, which kept her from enjoying those comforts which would otherwise have been her portion. However, at last, she was filled with peace and joy in believing, and left the world with cheering prospects of eternal happiness; she had no doubt or fear, nor any desire, but *to depart and be with Christ.* August 1st. 1742, Mr. John Wesley committed the body of his mother to the earth, in Bunhill-fields burying-ground, opposite to which stands the New Chapel, City-road, and where himself is now buried.

Mrs. Wesley had several daughters. Their education was carefully attended to, and most of them had fine poetic geniuses, but especially Mrs. Wright; she was her mother's tenth or eleventh child. It has been said, that when she was not more than eight years of age, she could read the Greek Testament. She was so gay and sprightly, witty and humorous, that her pa-

rents felt pain and fear concerning her, especially as she was sometimes betrayed into little inadvertencies, which in some measure contributed to her unhappiness in future life. She experienced a disappointment, and soon after was married to another person, no way adapted to make her happy, and by whom she was unkindly treated. Her situation preyed upon her spirits; her health gradually declined; and she sunk into such a degree of melancholy as made her truly wretched. Most of the verses written by her, which have been preserved, were written during this period, and though good poetry, bear evident marks of deep bodily and mental affliction. But after passing many years in this gloomy state, she obtained those comforts of religion, which soothed her mind, and gave her peace; though she never fully recovered her bodily health. After persevering in a course of piety for some years, patient in suffering, and waiting in joyful hopes of a better country, on March 21, 1751, she died in the Lord. Mr. Charles Wesley preached her funeral sermon, from Isa. lx. 20. *Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.*

Another of Mr. Wesley's sisters was married to a Mr. Hall, who was one of his pupils at Oxford, and supposed to be an upright and pious man. But, after some years, he deserted his wife, and led an abandoned course of life. Mrs. Hall bore her trials with remarkable patience and resignation. She outlived all her sisters and brothers, and died between four and five months after Mr. John Wesley, on the 12th of July, 1791, in peace and joyful hope.

Mr. Samuel Wesley, junior, was older than Mr. John Wesley, almost eleven years, and sixteen older than Mr. Charles. He was sent to Westminster School in 1704, and admitted a king's scholar in 1707. Before he left home, his mother had diligently and successfully taught him the knowledge of religion, and his mind was brought under religious impressions. When at school, she wrote to him, to put him in mind of his obligations to devote himself to the service of God, especially as he

was intended, by his own choice, for the Christian ministry. She advised him to be diligent in his studies, and to go through his employments methodically. She told him, that when she was at her father's house, she used to allow herself as much time for recreation, as she spent in private devotion; not that she always spent so much, but gave herself leave to go so far, but no farther: and she fixed so much time for sleep, eating, company, &c. "Begin and end the day," said she, "with him, who is the Alpha and Omega; and if you really experience what it is to love God, you will redeem all the time you can for his more immediate service." Be very strict in observing the Lord's-day. In all things endeavour to act upon principle, and do not live like the rest of mankind, who pass through the world like straws upon a river, which are carried which way the stream or wind drives them." When senior scholar at Westminster, the Bishop of Rochester, the predecessor of Atterbury took him to his seat, at Bromley, in Kent, to read to him in the evenings. But as he was then eagerly pursuing his studies, what would have gratified many, greatly mortified him. His mother's advices were duly attended to by him, and he retained his sobriety, the fear of God, and consequently a regard for religion.

In 1711, he was elected to Christ-Church, in Oxford, and here also was deemed an excellent classical scholar. After, and perhaps before, he had taken his degree of Master of Arts, he was sent for to officiate at Westminster-school; and soon after he took orders, under the patronage of Dr. Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, and Dean of Westminster. He became a wise and able preacher, and his conduct was exemplary, both as a Christian and a minister, He had a nice sense of honour; was a man of great integrity, and greatly hated falsehood and duplicity: he was very humane, and of a charitable disposition; and was remarkable for filial affection, and duty to his parents.

He was greatly esteemed by Lord Oxford, Bishop Atterbury, Mr. Pope, and several other persons of the first character and literary talents.

Bishop Atterbury had incurred the hatred of the prime minister, Sir Robert Walpole, and the rest of the ministry, by opposing their measures. And on the 24th

of August, 1722, he was apprehended, under an accusation of being concerned in a plot for subverting the government, and bringing in the pretender. Mr. Wesley's intimacy with him, made Walpole dislike him also. Yet Samuel was not disaffected to the present reigning family. And as he probably considered Bishop Atterbury as being innocent, his friendship for him remained unaltered. This his attachment to Atterbury, and his personal disapprobation of Walpole's administration, blocked up his way to preferment at Westminster. He left the situation in 1732, and became Master of the free Grammar-School, at Tiverton, in Devon, and presided over it till he died. In 1735, he published a quarto volume of poems, for which he obtained a numerous and respectable list of subscribers. Several of these are very witty and satirical, as well as instructive, and some of a grave and serious description.

He was, however, a very high churchman, and had objections to extempore prayer. Hence he disapproved of the conduct of his brothers, John and Charles, when they became itinerant preachers. Several letters passed between him and his brother John, both on the *doctrines* which he taught, and his *manner* of teaching them.

His health was not good when he left Westminster, and it was not much improved by his removal to Tiverton.

On the night of the 5th of November, 1739, he went to bed, apparently as well as usual; was taken very ill about three in the morning, and after four hours illness, died at seven.

When we survey Mr. John Wesley rising into public notice, and having sprung from such a venerable stock of ancestors, both on the side of his father and his mother, and surrounded with such respectable brothers and sisters, we feel our minds prepared for something great and good, beyond what is common: and when we proceed to remark his education, and his religious instruction particularly, we shall see the best foundation laid for useful knowledge, and genuine Christianity.

There has been some difference in the accounts given of his age, by different persons of the family; but the following certificate of it, was sent by his father to the bishop, before he was ordained priest.

"Epworth, August 23, 1728.

"John Wesley, M. A. Fellow of Lincoln College, was twenty-five years old the 17th of June last, having been baptized a few hours after his birth, by me.

"SAMUEL WESLEY,
"Rector of Epworth."

He was educated for the church: and in 1720, he entered a student, at Christ-Church College, in Oxford, and not long after, took his degree of Bachelor of Arts. He was ordained Deacon, September 19, 1725, by Dr. Potter, Bishop of Oxford. March 17, 1726, he was elected Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. February 14, 1727, he took his degree of Master of Arts. September 22, 1728, he was ordained priest, by the same bishop by whom he had been ordained deacon.

He soon became very thoughtful and pious. This was considerably promoted by reading Bishop Taylor's Rules and Exercises of Holy Living, and Mr. Law's Serious Call to a Holy Life. His example and advice, under God, induced his brother Charles, who was also at College, to become pious. They gave great attention to reading books of devotion, prayed much and fervently and received the Lord's Supper every week. Others imbibed the same spirit, and associated with them for the purpose of piety. They regulated their time and employments by certain rules, which accidentally got them the nickname of Methodist. And as the disciples of Christ were first called Christians in Antioch, so John Wesley and his followers, were first called Methodists at the University of Oxford.

It is well worthy of attention, that this name of Methodist, which was orriginally given in derision, has since been contended for by the Arminians and Calvinists, as being peculiarly honourable; while others have gone as far as conscience would permit, and perhaps sometimes a little farther, to escape what they deemed an odious appellation.

The founders of the Methodists, were students at the University of Oxford, and were first called the *Sacramentarians*, then *the Godly Club*, and finally *Methodists*. A Fellow of Merton College, observing the regular

method in which they divided their time between their devotions, their studies, their rest, &c. said, "Here is a new sect of Methodists sprung up," alluding to an eminent college of physicians at Rome, who were so called on account of putting their patients under a peculiar regimen. See Mosheime's Eccles. Hist. 17 Cent. Sec. 2. p. 1. But it is not generally known, that the name of Methodist had been given long before the days of Mr. Wesley, to a religious party in England, which was distinguished by some of those marks which are supposed to characterize the present Methodists. A person called John Spencer, who was librarian of Sion College, 1657, during the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, in a book which he published, consisting of extracts from various authors, speaks of the eloquence and elegance of the sacred Scriptures, and asks, "where are now our Anabaptists, and plain pack-staff Methodists, who esteem all flowers in rhetoric in sermons no better than stinking weeds?" By the Anabaptists, we know that he means a denomination of Christians, which is still in existence; and though we have not at this time any particular account of the Methodists of that day, it seems very probable that one description of Religionists, during that fertile period, was denominated Methodists. These, it would seem, distinguished themselves by plainness of speech, rejecting the aids of literature, and the ornaments of eloquence in their public discourses. This might have been known to the Fellow of Merton College, who gave the Oxonian Pietists the name of Methodists, though it seems probable Mr. Wesley never caught the idea. See Spencer's Things New and Old, p. 161. A. D 1658; or the beginning of the third volume of the History of the Dissenters.

In 1732, this pious company were joined by Mr. Benjamin Ingham, and soon after, Mr. James Hervey, and Mr. George Whitefield, were added to the number. These were all collegians, and must be considered as the *first Methodists*. But how greatly has this mustard-seed grown and spread! Mr. Wesley says, "In 1729, my brother and I reading the Bible, saw inward and outward holiness therein, followed after it, and incited others so to do. In 1737, we saw that this holiness

comes by faith, and that men are justified before they are sanctified. But still holiness was our point, *inward and outward holiness.*"

His first sermon delivered extemporary, was in All-Hallow's Church, Lombard-street, London, in the beginning of the year 1735. At that time, and for years after, to preach without a book was considered as a very wonderful thing.

In 1735, he was prevailed upon to go as a missionary to Georgia, in America. In the ship in which he crossed the Atlantic Ocean, he became acquainted with the Moravians. By them he was taught the way of the Lord more perfectly, particularly, that holiness comes by faith.

On Tuesday, Oct. 14, 1735, Mr. Wesley, his brother Charles, Mr. Benjamin Ingham, and Mr. Delamotte, son of a merchant in London, took boat at Gravesend, in order to embark for Georgia. Their motive in leaving their native country was not to gain riches or honour, but to glorify God.

He began to learn the German language, in order to converse with the Moravians, six and twenty of whom were in the ship. On Sunday the 19th, he preached extemporary, and then administered the Lord's Supper.

After they got to sea, their common way of living was this: from four to five in the morning, they employed in private prayer. From five to seven they read the bible together, carefully comparing it with the writings of the earliest ages. At seven they breakfasted; and at eight had public prayers. From nine to twelve, Mr. Wesley usually learned German, his brother Charles wrote sermons, Mr. Delamotte learned Greek, and Mr. Ingham instructed the children. About one they dined. From dinner to four, they spent in reading to such, as each of them had taken into a sort of charge, or in talking seriously to them. At four were evening prayers; when either the second lesson was explained, (as it *always* was in the morning), or the children were catechised and instructed. From five to six they again used private prayer. From six to seven he read in their cabin to two or three of the passengers, (about eighty of whom were on board,) and each of his

brethren did the same to a few more in other cabins. At seven he joined with the Germans in their public service; and Mr. Ingham read between decks to as many as desired to hear. At eight they met again to exhort and instruct one another. Between nine and ten they went to bed, and neither the roaring of the sea, nor the motion of the ship, could deprive them of the refreshing sleep which God gave them.

In an early part of their voyage they encountered three storms, and the third was a very violent one, "The waves of the sea were mighty, and raged horribly. They rose up to the heaven above, and clave down to hell beneath." After prayers they spent two or three hours in conversing suitably to the occasion, confirming one another in a calm submission to the wise, holy, and gracious will of God. And now a storm did not appear so terrible as before.

Mr. Wesley had before observed the great seriousness of the Germans, as well as their humility, meekness, and patience. He had now an opportunity of seeing how far they were delivered from the spirit of fear.—When in the midst of the Psalm with which their service began, the sea broke over them, and split the mainsail in pieces, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks, as if the great deep had already swallowed them up; a terrible scream began among the English; but the Germans calmly sung on. Mr. Wesley afterwards asked one of them, "Were you not afraid?" He answered, "I thank God, No." Mr. Wesley asked, "But were not your women and children afraid?" The German mildly replied, "No; our women and children are not afraid to die." From the Germans Mr. Wesley went to the crying and trembling English, and pointed out to them the difference, in the hour of trial, between him that feareth God, and him that feareth him not.

After falling in with the skirts of a hurricane, and encountering another storm, on the 5th of February they arrived safe in the Savannah River, and cast anchor. The next morning, about eight o'clock, they first set foot on American land. Mr. Oglethorpe, the governor of the Colony, and with whom they had crossed the Atlantic Ocean, led them to a rising ground, where they all kneeled down to return thanks to God.

The house in which Mr. Wesley and his companions were to reside not being ready, they took up their lodgings with the Germans. "We had now," says Mr. Wesley, "an opportunity, day by day, of observing their whole behaviour. They were always employed, always cheerful, and in good humour one with another. They had put away all anger, strife, wrath, bitterness, clamour, and evil speaking. They walked worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called, and adorned the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things." Again, says Mr. Wesley, "After several hours spent in conference and prayer, they proceeded to the election and ordination of a bishop. The great simplicity, as well as solemnity of the whole, almost made me forget the seventeen hundred years between, and imagine myself in one of those assemblies, where form and state were not; but Paul the tent-maker, or Peter the fisherman presided; yet with the demonstration of the Spirit and power."

Sunday, March the 7th, he entered upon his ministry at Savannah, by preaching on the epistle for the day, 1 Cor. xiii. His congregations and prospects were at first very encouraging, and he was ready to form very sanguine expectations as to the success of his labours. He bestowed part of his labours upon Frederica; and upon one occasion especially was in very great danger of losing his life by drowning between that place and Savannah.

Not finding any door open for the prosecution of the grand design which induced him to go to America, the conversion of the Indians, he and his companions considered in what way they might be the more useful to their charge at Savannah. And they agreed, 1st. To advise the more serious among them to form themselves into a sort of little society, and to meet once or twice a week in order to improve, instruct, and exhort one another. 2. To select out of those a smaller number for a more intimate union with each other. It is very probable that this plan was adopted from a similar one which they saw among the Germans; and here was the origin of Classes and Bands among the Methodists, and which have been so useful to thousands and tens of thousands.

He wished to have gone to preach to the Indians, but the door did not open. But he says, "Thursday, July 1, the Indians had an audience, and another on Saturday, when Chicali their head man, dined with Mr. Oglethorpe. After dinner, I asked the grey-headed old man, "What he thought he was made for?" He said, "He that is above knows what he made us for; we know nothing. We are in the dark; but white men know much; and yet white men build great houses, as if they were to live for ever. But white men cannot live for ever. In a little time, white men will be dust as well as I." Mr. Wesley told him, "If red men will learn the good book, they may know as much as white men. But neither we nor you can understand that book, unless we are taught by him that is above; and he will not teach, unless you avoid what you already know is not good." The Indian answered, "I believe that; he will not teach us, while our hearts are not white. And our men do what they know is not good: they kill their own children. And our women do what they know is not good: they kill the child before it is born. Therefore he that is above does not send us the good book." He had several other interesting conversations with some of the principal Indians, which will be found in his *first Journal.*

A Frenchman, who had been a prisoner of war for some months among these Indians, gave Mr. Wesley the following account of their manner of life. He said, "They do nothing but eat, and drink, and smoke, from morning till night, and in a manner from night till morning. For they rise at any hour of the night when they awake; and after eating and drinking as much as they can, go to sleep again." And here is a true *Delineation of the Religion of Nature.* December the 24, 1737, he sailed over Charleston-bar, in the Samuel, Captain Piercy, and landed at Deal, on the 1st of February. Mr. Whitefield had just sailed for America, neither of them knowing any thing of the other's situation or designs.

Mr. Wesley's departure from America was expedited by an event, which he does not fully explain in his Journal, which has caused some to hesitate respecting the propriety of his conduct; or at least *that propriety* which might be expected in so eminent a man. But his bio-

graphers, Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, have thrown such light upon the affair, as must do away all suspicions with regard to the integrity of Mr. Wesley's conduct. It appears, a deep-laid scheme was designed to ruin him in the highest sense of the word. But his soul escaped as a bird out of the snare, and he held fast faith, and a good conscience.

He arrived in London after an absence of two years and near four months. In the beginning of the second Journal, he says, "Many reasons I have to bless God, though the design I went upon did not take effect, for my having been carried into that strange land, contrary to all my preceeding resolutions. Hereby, I trust, he hath in some measure humbled me, and proved me, and shown me what was in my heart. Hereby I have been taught to *beware of men.* Hereby I am come to know assuredly, that if *in all our ways we acknowledge God,* he will, where reason fails, *direct our paths,* by lot or by the other means which he knoweth. Hereby I was delivered from the fear of the sea, which I had both dreaded and abhorred from my youth. Hereby God has given me to know many of his servants, particularly those of the church of Hernhuth. Hereby my passage is open to the writings of holy men, in the German, Spanish, and Italian tongues, &c."

He had not been a week in London, before he fell in with Peter Bohler, a Moravian Bishop, just landed from Germany. With this man he became very intimate, and it was by him that he was convinced of the want of *that faith whereby alone we are saved.* He immediately began to preach according to his new views, and the first person to whom he offered *salvation by faith alone* was a prisoner, of the name of Clifford, under sentence of death. It was with this man that Mr. Wesley first prayed extempore. After a space he rose up, and eagerly said, "I am now ready to die. I know Christ has taken away my sins, and there is no more condemnation for me." The same composed cheerfulness he showed when he was carried to the place of execution; and in his last moments he was the same, enjoying a perfect peace, in confidence that he was *accepted in the Beloved.*

Mr. Wesley and his friends began to form themselves into a little society, as he and his pious friends had done before at Oxford, and afterwards in Georgia, and agreed upon certain rules for their better regulation. He preached frequently in different churches, but generally gave offence by his doctrine, so that one church after another was shut against him. But, as yet, he had not that faith in Christ that brings peace and assurance, accompanied with the Spirit of God witnessing with the spirit of the believers. But he soon obtained this inestimable blessing. For one evening in May, he went to a Christian society in Aldergate-street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, says he, "while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed, I felt I did trust in Christ; Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me, that he had taken away *my* sins, even mine, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death."

Shortly after this, he determined, if God should permit, to retire for a short time into Germany. He had formed this resolution before he left America. He hoped that some conversation with those holy men whom he expected to find at Hernhuth, who were themselves living witnesses of the full power of faith, and who yet knew how to bear with them who were weak, would contribute to his establishment in true religion, and also his progress and perseverance. He embarked at London, June 13th, and on the 15th reached Rotterdam in Holland.

In travelling through Holland and Germany, he conversed with, and was hospitably entertained by divers persons, who were happy partakers of the faith of the gospel; this was the case, especially at Marienbourn, where he first conversed with Count Zinzendorf, and other eminent witnesses of the power of true religion.

On Tuesday, the first of August, they arrived at Hernhuth, a settlement of the Moravians, in upper Lusatia. Hernhuth is a village, and at that time containing about a thousand inhabitants, gathered out of different nations, having fled thither to escape the pollutions of the world;

and that they might live wholly to God, in discipline, as well as in faith and practice; here was a body of true primitive apostolic Christians. No immorality was allowed among them, and every branch of pure and undefiled religion was zealously enforced. Here Mr. Wesley conversed with divers persons of deep understanding and experience in the things of God, and heard sundry of them preach, to his great edification, and the establishment of his soul in the truth as it is in Jesus. One of them gave him at his request, the following definition of the full assurance of faith, "Repose in the blood of Christ; a firm confidence in God, and persuasion of his favour; serene peace and steadfast tranquility of mind, with a deliverance from fleshly desire, and from every outward and inward sin. In a word, the heart which before was tost like a troubled sea, was still and quiet, and in a sweet calm." These Moravian brethren claim kindred in a spiritual sense, with Martin Luther, John Calvin, and John Huss. Mr. Wesley's second Journal will give the reader much interesting information respecting the church at Hernhuth, and the school or academy at that place.

In his return from Hernuth, he learnt that the Lutherans, as well as the Papists, were great enemies to the Moravian brethren. He spent a night or two in Mentz, and an hour in the great church there, and copied from a paper on the door, what the following is a translation of.

A full release for the poor souls in Purgatory.

"His Papal Holiness, Clement the 12th, hath this year, 1738, on the seventh of August, most graciously privileged the cathedral church of St. Christopher in Mentz, so that every priest, as well secular as regular, who will read mass at an altar for the soul of a Christian departed, on any holiday, or any day within the octave thereof, or on two extraordinary days, to be appointed by the ordinary, of any week in the year, may each time deliver a soul out of the fire of purgatory."

After an absence of three months, he preached three times in London, on Sunday, Sept. 17. And having

now passed through all the preparatory steps, and being every way qualified and prepared, the Lord soon led him forth in the way he intended him to go, and begun to work mightily by his instrumentality.

In 1739, Mr. Wesley being denied the use of the churches in Bristol, preached for the first time in the open air, on an eminence in the suburbs of that city.—And the same year, the churches being shut against him in London also, he took his stand in Moorfields, and other public places. On the 12th of May, this year, the first stone was laid in Bristol, of the first Methodist chapel in England. November 11, this same year, he began to preach in a building in Moorfields, London, in which the King's cannon had formerly been cast, and was many years after this known by the name of *The Foundry*. It was just at this time that class-meetings were instituted, as we learn from the introduction to the rules of the society. However, it appears this institution did not get properly organized and established till the year 1742.

April 9, 1742, the first watch-night was held in London. The custom originated with the colliers of Kingswood, near Bristol, who had been in the habit when slaves to sin, of spending every Saturday night at the ale-house. They now devoted that night to prayer and singing of hymns. Mr. Wesley hearing of this, resolved to make something like it general. At first, he ordered watch-nights to be once a month, when the moon was at the full, and then fixed them once a quarter. In this year also, he began the quarterly visitation of the classes, which has been constantly and universally attended to ever since. At this visitation, each member receives a new ticket.

It was on the 26th of May, 1742, that Mr. Wesley arrived at Birstal, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, having been invited thither by that faithful and useful man, John Nelson.

1743, the rules of the society were first published.

Even at this very early period of Methodism, Mr. Wesley found an open door in many places in the different parts of England and Wales. In the year 1744, he preached among other places, at Brentford, Marlbo

nough, Bath, Bristol, London, at many places in Cornwall and Wales, at Gloucester, Stroud, Cheltenham, Tewkesbury, Evesham, Sheffield, Epworth in Lincolnshire. Birstal, and other places in the West Riding of Yorkshire, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Durham, and other places in the North, at sundry places in Cheshire and Derbyshire, &c.

During this year, he received some pleasing accounts of a revival of religion having broke out in the English army on the continent.

In June 1744, the first conference was held in London. It consisted of six clergymen, and a few lay-preachers. But there was no annual publication of the minutes of the conference till the year 1763. On Christmas-day, 1744, Mr. Wesley drew up the rules of the bands.

August 1, 1745, the second conference was held in Bristol.

Mr. Wesley not only studied and laboured hard, at the same time enduring much unmerited reproach, but he passed through much fatigue and danger in his travels. In his Journal, he tells us, that in the latter end of February, he preached at Nottingham. The next day, a friend piloted him through the mire, and water, and snow, to Sykehouse. Proceeding northward, he found much snow about Borough-Bridge, which made him travel so slowly, that night overtook him when he had six or seven miles to go to the place where he had intended to lodge. The next day the roads were abundantly worse. The snow was deeper, the causeways were impassable, and there was such a hard frost succeeding the thaw, that the ground was like glass. At that time, and for some years after, there were no turnpike-roads in those parts of England. He was often obliged to walk, it being impossible to ride. He passed over dreary moors, which appeared great pathless wastes of white, till at length, late in the evening, he reached Newcastle. "Many a rough journey, (said he) have I had before; but one like this I never had."

May 13, 1746, the third conference was held in the same city. It consisted of the two Wesleys, two other clergymen, and of five lay-preachers.

About this time, Mr. Wesley received the following interesting letter from the candid and amiable Dr. Doddrige.

Northampton, July 29, 1746.

"Rev. and dear Sir,

"I am truly glad that the long letter I last sent was agreeable to you. I bless God, that my prejudices against the writers of the Establishment were so early removed and conquered. I greatly rejoice when I see in those whom, upon other accounts, I most highly esteem as the excellent of the earth, that their prejudices against their brethren of any denomination, are likewise subdued, and that they are coming nearer to the harmony, for which I hope, when we shall be one in Christ Jesus.

"I have always esteemed it to be the truest act of friendship, to use our mutual endeavours to render the characters of each other as blameless and as valuable as possible. And I have never felt a more affectionate sense of my obligations, than when those worthy persons who have honoured me with their affection and correspondence, have freely told me what they thought amiss in my temper and conduct. This, therefore, dear sir, is an office which you might reasonably expect from me, if I had for some time enjoyed an intimate knowledge of you. But it has always been a maxim with me, not to believe any flying story, to the prejudice of those whom I had apparent reason, from what I knew of them, to esteem. And consequently, as I should never make this a foundation, you must be contented to wait longer, before you will be likely to receive that office of fraternal love, which you ask from,

Rev. and dear Sir,

Your obliged and affectionate
Brother and Servant,
P. Doddridge."

"P. S. Your caution has suggested a thought to me, whether it be modest to call ourselves humble? If the expression mean, a real readiness to serve in love in any thing low, as washing the feet of another, I hope I can say, *I am your humble servant*: but if it mean one who

is in all respects as humble as he could wish, God forbid I should arrogate to myself so proud a title! In what can I say, *I have already attained?* Only I love my Divine Master, and I would not have a thought in my heart that he should disapprove. I feel a sweetness in being assuredly in his gracious hand, which all the world cannot possibly afford; and which I really think, would make me happier in a dark dungeon, than ten thousand worlds could make me without it. And therefore, I love every creature on earth that bears his image. And I do not expose those, who, through ignorance, rashness, or prejudice, have greatly injured me."

June 16, 1747, the fourth conference was held in London. It consisted of four clergyman and two lay-preachers. In this year Methodism began in Ireland. in the city of Dublin.

June 22, 1748, the fifth conference was held in Bristol. It cannot be gathered with certainty, either from Mr. Wesley's Journals, or any other source of information, that there was a conference every year from this time till 1763, and yet it appears that in some of those years there were two conferences. This year Kingswood school was opened, for the education of preachers' children and others, though now it is wholly confined to the former.

1750. In February, this year, a riotous and cruel persecution commenced against the Methodists in the city of Cork. The mob was headed by one Butler, a ballad-singer, who was secretly encouraged by some of the magistrates. The grand Jury, at the next assizes, presented Mr. Charles Wesley, seven travelling preachers, and Mr. Sullivan, who received the preachers into his house in Cork, as persons of ill fame, and prayed that they might be transported. But when the assizes came, the judge dismissed them all in the most honourable manner, without attempting to try them.

In giving a history of the Methodists, however brief, something more may be thought necessary concerning the persecutions they have endured. And be it observed, that all persecution does not consist in acts of violence. A man may be persecuted by being slandered, defamed, and degraded. Of this species of persecution,

Mr. Wesley and his adherents have had as great a portion, as perhaps ever was the lot of any people upon earth. And though they are now better known, and the prejudices of many are removed, or at least softened, yet it may still be said with great truth, "As for this sect it is every where spoken against." But the Methodists are neither surprised nor dismayed with this: rather, they consider it as an evidence of their being the people of God. They remember the words of their Saviour, who said, "Woe unto you, when all men speak well of you!" and "Blessed are ye, when men revile, and persecute, and say all manner of evil of you falsely." They know that as long as the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent have each an existence upon earth, there will be enmity between them; and that "they who are after the flesh, will persecute them who are after the Spirit. This persecuting spirit has frequently produced acts of violence against the Methodists. One very remarkable instance of this was at Wednesbury in Staffordshire.

In 1743, a riotous mob committed acts of outrage and cruelty for several days together, and were encouraged so to do by the magistrates. Men, women with child, and even children, were evil-treated, knocked down, and abused with savage fury. Houses were stripped of their furniture, vast quantities of goods were carried off, feather-beds were cut in pieces and the feathers strewed in the streets. They broke open houses, pulled off some of the roofs, and destroyed many windows. A reverend gentleman said to the mob at Darlaston, after they had committed these outrages, "Well, my lads, he that has done it *out of pure zeal for the Church*, I do not blame. But, my lads, I hope you will let us *settle our affairs in our own parish ourselves;* nevertheless if these men should come, then *your help will be needful.*" During all this, none of the neighbouring magistrates would exert their authority to quell these mobs, or protect the Methodists. And when Mr. John Wesley came into that country, the Darlaston mob beset the house in which he was, and cried, "Bring out the minister." After some time he went out and said, "Here I am; what do you want with me?" They said, "To

go with us to the justice," He told them, "That I will, with all my heart." So he walked before, and two or three hundred of them followed after, first to one justice, and then to another, but the justices made excuses, and would not be seen. Possibly one principal reason for this was, they knew the mob had no real accusation to bring against Mr. Wesley, and therefore an appearance before a justice must have ended in his release and the dispersion of the rioters. When this mob began to disperse, he fell into the hands of another, from Walsal, which came pouring in like a flood. They dragged him along, and when he attempted to go into a house, they pulled him back by the hair of the head, into the midst of the mob, who were as so many ramping and roaring lions. At length he was delivered, and received far less injury than might have been expected; so wonderfully did Providence watch over and defend him.

A man of the name of Thomas Beard, against whom no crime was alleged, but that of being a Methodist, was pressed, and dragged away from his family, and marched to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where through fatigue and abusive treatment he fell sick of a fever. He was sent to the hospital, where he was bled; his arm mortified, and was cut off; and in two or three days he died.

It was about the same time that John Nelson was pressed for a soldier, and marched along with the army for many weeks; he was sometimes confined in a dungeon, and all this for no other crime real or pretended, but that he was a Methodist.

The first effectual check that was given to this mobbing, I believe was in London. Sir John Ganson, chairman of the Middlesex justices, waited on Mr. Wesley, in the name of his brethren, to say, That the justices had orders from the government to do him and his friends justice whenever they should apply; his Majesty being determined, that no man in his dominions should be persecuted for conscience sake. This reflects great honour upon the sovereign. But it was become absolutely necessary that something should be done to quell the increasing tumults. Of this necessity even the enemies of the Methodists were made sensible. In Staf-

fordshire, the mob turned upon their employers, and threatened, unless they gave them money, to serve them as they had done the Methodists. And if they saw a stranger who had the appearance of a Methodist, they immediately attacked him.

A Quaker happened to ride through Wednesbury, they swore he was a preacher; pulled him off his horse, dragged him to a coalpit, and were with difficulty prevented from throwing him in. But he prosecuted them at the assizes, and from that time the tumults in Staffordshire subsided.

After some years of persecution and oppression, having gained a few trials, they began to be more peremptory in demanding justice. But at the quarter sessions they were frequently disappointed. However, they traversed and appealed to the higher courts. They often succeeded at the assizes, and almost always at the king's-bench. By degrees it became understood, that the Methodists had a right to liberty and protection, as well as their fellow-subjects, and that they were determined to claim these privileges. However, a little while before the death of Mr. Wesley, attempts were made in some parts of the kingdom to prosecute them under the conventicle act. But this was a measure so shocking to the candid and liberal part of the public, that it was soon abandoned, even by those whose spirit and principles were the most intolerant.

In the year 1793, there was an outrageous and unprovoked persecution at Great Bradfield, in Essex, for which several persons were tried before Judge Lawrence, at Chelmsford, in May, 1794, when the cause of religious liberty triumphed over the spirit of persecution. There is much excellence in the laws of England, and perhaps nothing is so pure among us as the administration of justice at the assizes.

It would be impossible, especially in the limits prescribed to this history, to give a full and explicit view of the persecution endured by the Methodists. A biographical account of the preachers, properly written by themselves, would have contributed most completely to this. Some of them have written short accounts of themselves, which were published in the first volume of

the Arminian Magazine. These give us many tragical accounts of the dangers they have been exposed to, and the cruelties they have endured from savage bigotry, and misguided zeal. Not a few persecutors, however, have been brought, like Saul of Tarsus, to preach, and many more to embrace, the faith they once persecuted.

What still awaits the Methodists they know not.—Flesh and blood would pray to be excused from persecution. But steady well-grounded faith, producing love to God, and a good hope of heaven, will not shrink from, or faint in any tribulation or distress for the sake of Christ.

This year, 1750, the seventh conference was held in Bristol. John Jane, one of the first Methodist preachers, died during this year. Another of the preachers sent Mr. Wesley the following account of his death: "John Jane was never well after walking from Epworth to Hainton, on an exceeding hot day, which threw him into a fever: but he was in great peace and love, even to those who greatly wanted love to him. He talked daily of the things of God. He was never without the love of God; spent much time in private prayer; and joined in prayer with the person in whose house he was, several times a day. On Friday, August 24th, growing, as he thought, stronger in body, he sat in the evening by the fire-side: about six o'clock, he fetched a deep sigh, and never spoke more. He lived till the same hour the next day, and then, without any struggle, or sign of pain, with a smile on his face, he passed away. His last words were, "I find the love of God in Christ Jesus." All his clothes, linen and woolen, stockings, hat, and wig, are not thought sufficient to answer his funeral expences which amount to 1*l.* 17*s*, 3*d*. All the money he had was 1*s*. 4*d*."

The eighth conference was held in the same place, in 1751. And it was in the spring of this year, that Mr. Wesley paid his first visit to Scotland, being accompanied by Mr. Christopher Hopper. It was also in this year the first disputes arose in the societies, concerning the propriety, or impropriety, of separating from the Church of England.

It was in this year, (1751) that Mr. Wesley married. "For many years," says he, "I remained single, be-

cause I believed I could be more useful in a single than in a married state. And I praise God, who enabled me so to do. I now as fully believed, that in my present circumstances, I might be more useful in a married state." His marriage, however, was not what is commonly called a happy one. This arose, probably, at least in some degree, from his peculiar situation with respect to the great work in which he was engaged. It was agreed between him and Mrs. Wesley, previous to their marriage, that he should not preach one sermon, or travel one mile the less on that account. But it was not long before she wished to confine him to a more domestic life; and when she found this to be impossible, she gave place to jealousy. This soured and irritated her temper, and was productive of many outrages.—After repeatedly leaving his house, and being brought back by his earnest importunities, she took her final departure, and left word that she would never return. After behaving in this way, it is no wonder he should laconically say, "I have not left her; I have not put her away; nor will I invite her back again." She died about nine years before him, and a stone was placed at the head of her grave, in Camberwell Church-yard, representing her as a person of piety, a tender parent, and a sincere friend.

1752. October 16, this year the ninth conference was held in Bristol, at which it was first determined, that the preachers should each have a salary of twelve pounds a year, to provide themselves cloathes, books, &c. Their food was provided for them where they laboured. Few men are more straitened and embarrassed in their circumstances than some preachers sometimes have been. It is well that God knows their wants.

1753. May 22, the tenth conference began in Leeds. All the former annual conferences were held either in London or Bristol. About thirty preachers were present upon this occasion, who were nearly the whole of the preachers at that time.

Till now, Mr. Wesley had enjoyed remarkably good health. But in October, 1753, he was seized with a consumptive disorder, which brought him near death. After trying other expedients, he went to the Hot-wells, near Bristol, to enjoy the benefit of those medicinal

springs. Here he spent about four months. But though unable to travel or preach, he would not be inactive, but began to write his notes on the New Testament; "a work," says he, "which I should scarcely ever have attempted, had I not been so ill as not to be able to travel or preach, and yet so well as to be able to read and write."

When in the most dangerous stage of this affliction, he received the following letter from the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield.

"*Bristol, Dec.* 3, 1753.

"*Rev. and very dear Sir,*

"If seeing you so weak when leaving London distressed me, the news and prospect of your approaching dissolution hath quite weighed me down. I pity myself, and the church, but not you; a radiant throne awaits you, and ere long you will enter into your Master's joy: yonder he stands with a massy crown, ready to put it on your head, amidst an admiring throng of saints and angels. But I, poor I, that have been waiting for my dissolution these nineteen years, must be left behind, to grovel here below! Well! this is my comfort: it cannot be long ere the chariots will be sent, even for worthless me.

"If prayers can detain you, even you, Rev. and very dear Sir, shall not leave us yet: but if the decree is gone forth, that you must now fall asleep in Jesus, may he kiss your soul away, and give you to die in the embraces of triumphant love! If in the land of the dying, I hope to pay my last respects to you next week. If not, Rev. and very dear Sir, F-a-r-e-w-e-ll. *Ego sequar, etsi non passibus equis.* [That is, I shall follow, though not with equal steps.] My heart is too big, tears trickle down too fast, and you are, I fear, too weak for me to enlarge. Underneath you may there be Christ's everlasting arms! I commend you to his never-failing mercy, and am,

Rev. and very dear Sir,
Your most affectionate, sympathizing,
And afflicted young brother,
In the Gospel of our common Lord,
G. WHITEFIELD."

"To prevent panegyric," in case he should then die, he wrote the following epitaph, and ordered that this inscription, if any, should be placed on his tomb-stone:

"Here lieth the Body of JOHN WESLEY,
"A brand plucked out of the burning:
"Who died of a consumption in the fifty-first year of his age;
"Not leaving, after his debts are paid, ten pounds behind him,
"Praying, God be merciful to me an unprofitable servant!"

May 22, 1754, the eleventh conference was held in London. During the preceding year, a breach had been made in the connexion, by Samuel Larwood, Jonathan Reeves, John Whitworth, Charles Skelton, and John Edwards, forming independent congregations, in different parts of England.

May 6, 1755, the twelfth conference began in Leeds. The *lawfulness* and *expediency* of separating from the Church was seriously and calmly considered: and on the third day, they all fully agreed in the general conclusion, that whether it was *lawful* or not, it was in no wise *expedient*. This year the practice of renewing the covenant with God, was first begun by Mr. Wesley, in London.

August 26, 1756, the thirteenth conference, consisting of about fifty preachers, began in Bristol. They again considered the point about a separation, when Mr. Wesley, and his brother Charles, closed the conference, with a solemn declaration of their purpose, never to separate from the church.

1757. There were two conferences held this year, a little one at Keighley, May 21, between Mr. Wesley and the preachers in that neighbourhood: and the regular annual one began August 4, in London. We shall not number that held at Keighly, but call that held in London the fourteenth conference. It was a conference of love and harmony. It was at this time that the first fixed allowance was made to preachers wives. It was first allowed to Mrs. Mather, and the annual sum was ten pounds; which would have gone further then than twenty pounds will now.

August 8, 1759, the sixteenth conference began in London. This conference was remarkable for a strict examination into the spirit and lives of the preachers.

August 29, 1760, the seventeenth conference began in Bristol. This year was remarkable for a great revival of religion in London and elsewhere, and especially on account of a great number of persons, who professed to be cleansed from all unrighteousness, or to be made perfect in love. But it was disgraced by some of those following impulses more than the Bible; using irreverent expressions in prayer; pretending to the gift of discernment of spirits, and of foretelling future events; and in pronouncing uncharitable and harsh censures against those who disapproved of their enthusiasm. The connexion was disturbed, and two or three years after, a considerable number of the society in London left Mr. Wesley's connexion, with Mr. Maxfield and George Bell at their head.

September 1, 1761, the eighteenth conference began in London. At this time the work of God swiftly increased: and there was also an increase of what was not justifiable. Mr. Wesley laboured hard to guard the people against extremes on both sides, and in some measure succeeded. His religious sentiments were both rational and scriptural, and he was always an enemy to rant and enthusiam.

1762. This year the nineteenth conference was held in Leeds, beginning on the 9th of August. God was graciously present, and it was a profitable season.—During this year, there was a considerable revival of religion in Ireland, and particularly in Dublin. Mr. Wesley says, "The person by whom chiefly it had pleased God to work this wonderful work, was John Manners, a plain man, of middling sense, and not eloquent, but rather rude in speech: one who had never before been remarkably useful, but seemed to be raised up for this single work: and as soon as it was done, he fell into a consumption, languished awhile, and died." I would just remark, that Mr. John Manners was buried in the Church-yard, in St. Saviour's-gate, in York; and that Mr. John Shaw, an itinerant preacher for many years; and latterly, Mr. Alexander Mather, are intered in the same grave. Mr. Manners informed Mr. Wesley, that during this gracious movement in Dublin, some were justified, or sanctified, almost every day; that the people were all on fire: and that the work was

continualy increasing. When Mr. Wesley visited Dublin, he found Mr. Manners had not at all exceeded the truth, in the plain unadorned accounts which he had sent him.

1763. In July this year, the twentieth conference was held in London. The resolutions of former conferences respecting discipline were now published.—The design and state of Kingswood-school were drawn up. The *deed of trust* was prepared by three eminent lawyers; and it was agreed earnestly to request *all* the societies to contribute to the yearly collection, which had only been made in a *few* of the societies hitherto. The number of the circuits was in England, 20; in Scotland. 2; in Wales, 2; in Ireland. 7. Total 31. This conference instituted *the preachers fund.*

It will give the reader a clear and interesting view of Mr. Wesley's opinion of noisy and irregular meetings for religious exercises, to transcribe part of his journal for August 27, 1763.

"Mr. Evan," says he, "gave me an account, from his own knowledge, of what has made a great noise in Wales." "It is common in the congregations, attended by Mr. W. W. and one or two other clergyman, after the preaching is over, for any one that has a mind to give out a verse of a hymn. This they sing over and over with all their might, perhaps above thirty, yea, forty times. Mean while, the bodies of two or three, sometimes ten or twelve, are violently agitated; and they lead up and down, in all manner of postures, frequently for hours together." Mr. Wesley adds, "I think it needs no penetration to understand this. They are honest, upright men, who really feel the love of God in their hearts. But they have little experience, either of the ways of God, or of the devices of Satan. So he serves himself of their simplicity, in order to wear them out, and to bring a discredit on the work of God."

August 16, 1764, the twenty-first conference began in Bristol. Twelve clergymen made their appearance at this conference, to endeavour to prevail upon Mr. Wesley to give up the societies under his care to the superintendence of those ministers in every place, who were pious and preached the gospel. And Mr. Charles

Wesley, who ceased to travel in 1757, and settled in Bristol, united with them. Mr. John Wesley, however, could not see into the propriety of this; but resisted their importunity, and the preachers unanimously concurred with him.

1765. On the 20th of August, the conference of this year began at Manchester; many subjects were discussed, and among the rest, the subject of female preaching. I cannot deny myself and the reader the pleasure of inserting a letter from Mr. Wesley to Miss Bosanquet, now Mrs. Fletcher, upon this delicate and controverted subject.

Londonderry, June 31, 1771.

"*My dear Sister*,

"I think the strength of the cause rests there, in your having an extraordinary call. So I am persuaded has every one of our lay-preachers: otherwise I could not countenance their preaching at all. It is plain to me, that the whole work of God termed Methodism, is an extraordinary dispensation of his providence. Therefore I do not wonder, if several things occur therein, which do not fall under ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul's ordinary rule of discipline was, "I permit not a woman to speak in the congregation," yet in extraordinary cases, he made a few exceptions, at Corinth in particular.

"I am, my dear sister, your affectionate brother,

"J. WESLEY."

August 12, 1766, the twenty-third conference was held in Leeds. And, says Mr. Wesley, "A happier one we never had nor a more profitable one. It both began and ended in love, and with a solemn sense of the presence of God."

August 18, 1767, the twenty-fourth conference began in London. It was a pleasant conference, and Mr. Whitefield attended the two last days; also many stewards and local preachers. It was at this conference that the members in society in the different circuits, first began to be published. They stood as follows:

	Circuits.	Preachers.	Members.
In England,	25	75	22,410
In Ireland,	9	19	2,391
In Scotland,	5	7	468
In Wales,	1	3	232
Total,	40	104	25,911

This conference determined that quarterly and occasional fasts should be observed in the different circuits: and spoke strongly against smuggling, as well as bribery at elections of members of parliament.

In August, 1768, the twenty-fifth conference was held in Bristol. It seems the harvest appeared to be great, and the labourers comparatively few. And at this conference it was resolved that no travelling preacher should carry on a trade, and this resolution was renewed and strengthened at the conference in 1770, and again in 1804.

August 1, 1769, the twenty-sixth conference commenced in Leeds. And the preachers had the pleasure of being informed, that Methodism had begun to take root in the vast continent of America. A preaching-house had been built at New-York, and a cry was heard, "Come over and help us." Mr. Richard Boardman and Mr. Joseph Pilmore willingly offered themselves for this service, and took a present in their hands of fifty pounds, as a token of brotherly love.—Methodism had its first introduction into America by certain persons who had emigrated thither from England and Ireland, assisted by Lieutenant, commonly called Captain Webb, who was in New-York with the army, and preached there and at Philadelphia with great zeal and success. In 1771, Mr. Francis Asbury was sent thither by Mr. Wesley and the conference. He now presides, under the character of Bishop, over all the Methodists in the United States, a country not less than 1,300 miles in length, and 500 in breadth.—May he not be said to have the largest see of any bishop in the world? yet many curates have larger salaries.

In August, 1770, the twenty-seventh conference was held in London. From this time the preachers' wives,

who derived support from the connexion, had their names, together with the circuit that was to give them the allowance, mentioned in the printed Minutes. Certain propositions inserted in the Minutes of this year, gave huge offence to the Calvinists, and certain champions among them blew the trumpet in Sion, and invited all their brethren to go forth in battle array, and *insist* upon Mr. Wesley's recanting what he had thus published. That most excellent man, Mr. Fletcher, vicar of Madely, became the vindicator of Mr. Wesley and the obnoxious propositions; and he did it to perfection, to the establishment and joy of Mr. Wesley's friends and the confusion and discomfiture of his opponents. Reader, do not fail to read Mr. Fletcher's five Checks to Antinomianism. He died, regretted by the church, and lamented by the world, August 14, 1785, in the 56th year of his illustrious life.

The twenty-eighth conference begun August the 6th, 1771 at Bristol. At this conference, Mr. Wesley says in his Journal, "we had more preachers than usual, in consequence of Mr. Shirley's circular letter. At ten on Thursday morning, he came with nine or ten of his friends. We conversed freely for about two hours. And I believe they were satisfied that we were not such dreadful heretics as they imagined, but were tolerably sound in the faith." However, several of the following years were remarkable and in one sense afflicting, on account of the controversy that was so warmly carried on between Mr. Wesley's vindicators and opposers. But truth is great and will prevail.

The twenty-ninth conference was held at Leeds, in the beginning of August, 1772. The next conference, the thirtieth, was held in London: and the thirty-first, in 1774, was held in Bristol. At these three conferences nothing new of any very interesting consequence occurred.

1775. A local preacher from Liverpool, Mr. John Crook, was induced to visit the Isle of Man. He was favoured with extraordinary success. Methodism, or in other words, true religion, has had a general, and very beneficial influence upon the inhabitants of that isle.

In August, 1775, the thirty-second conference was held in Leeds. Complaints from different quarters intimated, that many of the preachers had neither grace nor gifts sufficient to qualify them for the work of the ministry. But after a full and close examination of the subject, the general opinion was, that those charges were without sufficient foundation.

The thirty-third conference began in London, August the 6th 1776. This was a conference remarkable for a strict examination of the preachers, as to their gifts, graces, and usefulness. The result was, that one was excluded for insufficiency, and two for improper behaviour. One hundred and fifty travelling preachers was the number then employed in Great Britain and Ireland. It was in August, this year, that Dr. Coke joined Mr. Wesley. See page 23 of his 18th Journal. He has been a most active and useful man.

In August, 1777, the thirty-fourth conference was held in Bristol. It seems it had been very generally reported, that the Methodists were a fallen people.—Mr. Wesley inquired very minutely into this at the conference, and was fully convinced, that they did not decrease, but increase, both in grace and number.—John Hilton, however, left the connexion, because the Methodists, as he said, were a fallen people, and joined the Quakers. It was at this conference that Mr. Wesley began to record in the annual Minutes those preachers who died in the year preceding.

On the 1st of January, 1778, Mr. Wesley published the first number of the Arminan Magazine. He continued to publish a number every month so long as he lived, and the conference has done the same since his death to this day. It has a vast circulation, and has done much good.

In August, 1778, as usual, this year, the thirty-fifth conference was held in Leeds.

August the 3d, 1779, the thirty-sixth conference commenced its sittings in London.

The thirty-seventh conference began in Bristol, on the 1st of August, 1780. At this time the Large Minutes, containing the whole of our discipline, were revised and confirmed.

1781. At the usual time, the thirty-eighth conference was held in Leeds.

In July, 1782, Dr. Coke, being delegated by Mr. Wesley, held a conference in Dublin. This has been annually continued ever since, and the Doctor has been almost always the president. It seems to have been of great advantage to the Irish Methodists.

August the 6th, 1782, the thirty-ninth conference began in London.

July 29, 1783, the fortieth conference began in Bristol. The preachers were duly impressed with the importance of having all our chapels so settled, that they could not be applied to any other purpose than those for which they were built. Dr. Coke endured much labour and reproach in forwarding this important object, and though he had some success, it was by no means equal to his wishes, nor what might have been expected.

February 28, 1784, Mr. Wesley executed the well-known Deed of Declaration, constituting one hundred preachers, whom he mentioned by name, "The Conference of the People called Methodists." This instrument was enrolled in his Majesty's High Court of Chancery. "The design of it was so to explain the phrase, "The Conference of the People called Methodists," that the trustees might not be able to alienate any chapels from the purpose for which they were built, and that the conference might possess the power of appointing preachers to all the chapels. But when the forty-first conference met in Leeds, in July, 1784, it was found that the Deed of Declaration had produced unpleasant consequences, as it had given huge offence to four or five preachers, whose names were not inserted in it, while many of their juniors, and perhaps their inferiors in some respects, had that honour. By the influence of Mr. Fletcher, a temporary peace was patched up. But it was not long before the two Hampsons quitted the connexion, the father becoming an independent minister at Tunbridge Wells, and the son getting episcopal ordination, and a living at Sunderland.

To throw light upon the subject, I will here insert a copy of the Deed of Declaration, accompanied by Dr.

Coke's account of its origin, written by the Doctor not a year before Mr. Wesley's death.

I once thought of leaving out the names of the hundred preachers mentioned in the Deed. But as it would then have appeared in a mutilated state, the reader shall have it just as Mr. Wesley executed it.

I would only remark, that not forty of the hundred are now alive, and not one half of these able to take circuits. "So soon passeth it away, and we are gone."

An Address to the Methodist Society in Great-Britain and Ireland, on the Settlement of the Preaching-Houses.—By Thomas Coke, L. L. D.

MY DEAREST BRETHREN,

It has long been the grief of my mind, that any thing should exist among us which gives much uneasiness to many of you, and will, if it be suffered to continue among us, be a ground for perpetual dissatisfaction, to the great hindrance of the work of God; I mean the power given to the conference, by the present mode of settling our preaching-houses.

I have opened my sorrowful mind at large to several of the most judicious of our preachers, men who have borne the heat and burden of the day; men of renown in our Israel; and they have with one voice advised me to lay before you this present plan of reconciliation.

For this purpose I shall, in the first place, relate to you the several steps by which the general deed, which was enrolled in Chancery by our dear honoured father in the gospel, Mr. Wesley, was set on foot, and afterwards completed. I shall secondly, present to you a copy of the general deed itself, with annotations.

SECT. I.

Of the several steps by which the general Deed was set on foot, and at last completed.

In the conference held in the year 1782, several complaints were made in respect to the danger in which we were situated, from the want of specifying in distinct and legal terms what was meant by the term, "The

Conference of the people called Methodists." Indeed the preachers seemed universally alarmed, and many expressed their fears that divisions would take place among us after the death of Mr. Wesley on this account. And the whole body of preachers present seemed to wish, that some methods might be taken to remove this danger, which appeared to be pregnant with evils of the first magnitude.

In consequence of this, (the subject lying heavy on my mind) I desired Mr. Clulow of Chancery Lane, London, to draw up such a case as I should judge sufficient for the purpose, and then to present it to that very eminent counsellor Mr. Maddox, for his opinion.—This was accordingly done; and Mr. Maddox informed us in his answer, that the deeds of our preaching-houses were in the situation we dreaded; that the law would not recognize the conference in the state in which it stood at that time; and consequently, that there was no central point which might preserve the connexion from splitting into a thousand pieces after the death of Mr. Wesley. To prevent this he observed that Mr. Wesley should enrol a deed in Chancery, which deed should specify the persons by name who composed the conference, together with the mode of succession for its perpetuity; and, at the same time, such regulations be established by the deed, as Mr. Wesley would wish the conference should be governed by after his death.

This opinion of Mr. Maddox I read in the conference held in the year 1783. The whole conference seemed grateful to me for procuring the opinion; and expressed their wishes that such a deed might be drawn up, and executed by Mr. Wesley, as should agree with the advice of that great lawyer, as soon as possible.

Soon after the conference was ended, Mr. Wesley authorised me to draw up, with the assistance of Mr. Clulow, all the leading parts of a deed, which should answer the above-mentioned purposes. This we did with much care: and, as to myself, I can truly say, with fear and trembling, receiving Mr. Maddox's advice in respect to every step we took, and laying the whole ultimately at Mr. Wesley's feet for his approba-

tion. There remained nothing now but to insert the names of those who were to constitute the conference. Mr. Wesley then declared, that he would limit the number to one hundred. This was indeed contrary to my very humble opinion; which was, that every preacher in full connexion should be a member of the conference; and that admission into full connexion should be looked upon as admission into membership with the conference; and I still believe it will be most for the glory of God, and the peace of our Zion, that the members of the conference admit the other preachers who are in full connexion, and are present at the Conferences from time to time, to a full vote on all occasions.* However, of course, I submitted to the superior judgment and authority of Mr. Wesley. But I do publicly avow, that I was not concerned in the limitation of the number, or the selection of the hundred preachers who were nominated the members of the conference.

All things necessary being completed in the Court of Chancery according to law, I thought it my duty to send copies of the deed to all assistants of circuits throughout Great-Britain, and afterwards carried copies of it to Ireland.

SECT. II.

An attested Copy of the Rev. John Wesley's Declaration and Establishment of the Conference of the People called Methodists, enrolled in His Majesty's High Court of Chancery, with Annotations.

To all to whom these presents shall come, JOHN WESLEY, late of Lincoln College, *Oxford*, but now of the *City-Road*, London, Clerk, sendeth greeting:

WHEREAS divers buildings commonly called chapels, with a messuage and dwelling-house, or other appurtenances to each of the same belonging, situate in various parts of Great-Britain, have been given and conveyed,

* My sentiments are precisely the same with those of Dr. Coke as here expressed. But this is now the established rule of conference, except in the choice of the president and secretary, and has been since the death of Mr. Wesley.

J. CROWTHER.

from time to time, by the said John Wesley to certain persons, and their heirs, in each of the said gifts and conveyances named, which are enrolled in His Majesty's High Court of Chancery, upon the acknowledgment of the said John Wesley, (pursuant to the Act of Parliament in that case made and provided,) UPON TRUST, that the trustees in the said several deeds respectively named, and the survivors of them, and their heirs and assigns, and the trustees for the time being to be elected, as in the said deeds is appointed, should permit and suffer the said John Wesley, and such other person and persons as he should for that purpose from time to time nominate and appoint, at all times during his life, at his will and pleasure, to have and enjoy the free use and benefit of the said premises, that he the said John Wesley, and such person or persons as he should nominate and appoint, might therein preach and expound God's holy word: And upon further trust, that the said respective trustees, and the survivors of them, and their heirs and assigns, and the trustees for the time being, should permit and suffer Charles Wesley, brother of the said John Wesley, and such other person and persons as the said Charles Wesley should for that purpose from time to time nominate and appoint, in like manner during his life.—To have, use, and enjoy the said premises respectively for the like purposes aforesaid: and after the decease of the survivor of them, the said John Wesley and Charles Wesley, then upon further trust, that the said respective trustees, and the survivors of them, and their heirs and assigns, and the trustees for the time being, for ever, should permit and suffer such person and persons, and for such time and times as should be appointed at the yearly conference of the people called Methodists in London, Bristol, or Leeds, and no others, to have and enjoy the said premises for the purposes aforesaid:* and whereas divers persons have

* This is only a repetition of that part of the old Deed of Settlement which relates to the Trust. Nor does this Deed alter the old mode of settlement in any respect, but was merely designed to specify who were then the members of the Conference, how the succession should be preserved, and by what regulation the Conference should be governed.

in like manner given, or conveyed, many chapels, with messuages and dwelling-houses, or other appurtenances to the same belonging, situate in various parts of Great-Britain, and also in Ireland, to certain trustees in each of the said gifts and conveyances respectively named, upon the like trusts, and for the same uses and purposes as aforesaid, (except only that in some of the said gifts and conveyances, no life-estate, or other interest, is therein or thereby given and reserved to the said Charles Wesley :) and whereas, for rendering effectual the trusts created by the said several gifts or conveyances, and that no doubt or litigation may arise with respect unto the same, or interpretation and true meaning thereof, it has been thought expedient by the said John Wesley, on behalf of himself as donor of the several chapels, with the messuages, dwelling-houses, or appurtenances before-mentioned, as of the donors of the said other chapels, with the messuages, dwelling-houses or appurtenances to the same belonging, given or conveyed to the like uses and trusts, to explain the words *yearly Conference of the people called Methodists*, contained in all the said trust-deeds, and to declare *what persons* are members of the said Conference, and how the *succession* and *identity* thereof is to be continued: *Now therefore these presents witness*, that, for accomplishing the aforesaid purposes, the said John Wesley doth hereby declare, that the Conference of the people called Methodists in London, Bristol, or Leeds, ever since there hath been any yearly conference of the said people called Methodists, in any of the said places, hath always heretofore consisted of the preachers and expounders of God's holy word, commonly called Methodist preachers, in connexion with, and under the care of the said John Wesley, whom he hath thought expedient, year after year, to summons to meet him, in one or other of the said places of London, Bristol, or Leeds, to advise with them for the promotion of the gospel of Christ, to appoint the said persons so summoned, and the other preachers and expounders of God's holy word, also in connexion with, and under the care of the said John Wesley, not summoned to the said yearly conference, to the use and enjoyment of the chapels and premises so given and conveyed upon trust for the said

John Wesley, and such other person and persons as he should appoint during his life as aforesaid; and for the expulsion of unworthy, and admission of new persons under his care, and into his connexion, to be preachers and expounders as aforesaid; and also of other persons upon trial for the like purposes: the names of all which persons so summoned by the said John Wesley, the persons appointed, with the chapels and premises to which they were so appointed, together with the duration of such appointments, and of those expelled, or admitted, into connexion, or upon trial, with all other matters transacted and done at the said yearly conference, have year by year been printed and published under the title of Minutes of Conference. *And these presents further witness*, and the said John Wesley doth hereby avouch and further declare, that the several persons herein after-named, to wit, the said John Wesley and Charles Wesley; Thomas Coke, of the city of London, doctor of civil law, James Creighton, of the same place, clerk, Thomas Tenant, of the same place, Thomas Rankin, of the same place; Joshua Kighley, of Seven Oaks, in the county of Kent; James Wood, of Rochester, in the said county of Kent; John Booth, of Colchester, Thomas Cooper, of the same place; Richard Whatcoat, of Norwich; Jeremiah Brittell, of Lynn, in the county of Norfolk, Jonathan Parkin, of the same place; Joseph Pescod, of Bedford; Christopher Watkins, of Northampton, John Barber, of the same place; John Broadbent, of Oxford, Joseph Cole of the same place; Jonathan Cousens, of the city of Gloucester, John Brittell, of the same place; John Mason, of Salisbury, George Story of the same place: Francis Wrigley, of St. Austell, in the county of Cornwall; William Green, of the city of Bristol; John Moon, of Plymouth-Dock, James Hall, of the same place, James Thom, of St. Austell aforesaid: Joseph Taylor, of Redruth, in the said county of Cornwall; William Hoskins, of Cardiff, Glamorganshire; John Leech, of Brecon, William Saunders, of the same place; Richard Rodda, of Birmingham; John Fenwick, of Burslem, Staffordshire, Thomas Hanby, of the same place; James Rogers, of Macclesfield, Samuel Bardsley, of the same place; John Murlin, of Manchester, William Percival,

of the same place; Duncan Wright, of the city of Chester, John Goodwin, of the same place; Parson Greenwood, of Liverpool, Zechariah Udall, of the same place, Thomas Vasey, of the same place; Joseph Bradford, of Leicester, Jeremiah Robertshaw, of the same place; William Myles, of Nottingham; Thomas Longley, of Derby; Thomas Taylor, of Sheffield, William Simpson, of the same place; Thomas Carlill, of Grimsby, in the county of Lincoln, Robert Scott, of the same place, Joseph Harper, of the same place; Thomas Corbitt, of Gainsborough, in the said county of Lincoln, James Ray, of the same place; William Thompson, of Leeds, in the county of York, Robert Roberts, of the same place; Samuel Bradburn, of the same place; John Valton, of Birstal, in the said county, John Allen, of the same place, Isaac Brown, of the same place; Thomas Hanson, of Huddersfield, in the said county, John Shaw, of the same place; Alexander Mather, of Bradford, in the said county; Joseph Benson, of Halifax, in the said county, William Dufton, of the same place; Benjamin Rhodes, of Kighley, in the said county; John Easton, of Coln, in the county of Lancaster, Robert Costerdine, of the same place; Jasper Robinson, of the Isle of Man, George Button, of the same place; John Pawson, of the city of York; Edward Jackson, of Hull; Charles Atmore, of the said city of York; Launcelot Harrison, of Scarborough; George Shadford, of Hull aforesaid; Barnabas Thomas, of the same place; Thomas Briscoe, of Yarm, in the said county of York, Christopher Peacock, of the same place; William Thom, of Whitby, in the said county of York, Robert Hopkins, of the same place; John Peacock, of Bernard-Castle; William Collins, of Sunderland; Thomas Dixon, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Christopher Hopper, of the same place, William Boothby, of the same place; William Hunter, of Berwick-upon-Tweed; Joseph Saunderson, of Dundee, Scotland, William Warrener, of the same place; Duncan M'Allum, of Aberdeen, Scotland; Thomas Rutherford, of the city of Dublin, in the kingdom of Ireland, Daniel Jackson, of the same place; Henry Moore, of the city of Cork, Ireland, Andrew Blair, of the same place; Richard Watkinson, of

Limerick, Ireland; Nehemiah Price, of Athlone, Ireland; Robert Lindsay, of Sligo, Ireland; George Brown, of Clones, Ireland; Thomas Barber, of Charlemount, Ireland; Henry Foster, of Belfast, Ireland, and John Crook, of Lisburne, Ireland, gentleman, being preachers and expounders of God's holy word, under the care and in connexion with the said John Wesley, have been, and now are, and do, on the day of the date hereof, constitute *the members of the said Conference*, according to the true intent and meaning of the said several gifts and conveyances, wherein the words *Conference of the People called Methodists* are mentioned and contained. And that the said several persons before-named and their successors forever, to be chosen as herein after mentioned, are and shall forever be construed, taken, and be *the Conference of the People called Methodists*. Nevertheless upon the terms, and subject to the regulations herein after prescribed, that is to say,

First, That the members of the said Conference, and their successors, for the time being for ever, shall assemble once in every year, at London, Bristol, or Leeds, (except as after-mentioned) for the purposes aforesaid; and the time and place of holding every subsequent Conference shall be appointed at the preceding one; save that the next conference, after the date hereof shall be holden at Leeds, in Yorkshire, the last Tuesday in July next.

Second, The act of the majority in number of the Conference assembled as aforesaid shall be had, taken, and be the act of the whole Conference; to all intents, purposes, and constructions whatsoever.

Third, That after the Conference shall be assembled as aforesaid, they shall first proceed to fill up all the vacancies occasioned by death, or absence, as after-mentioned.

Fourth, * No act of the Conference assembled as aforesaid, shall be had, taken, or be the act of the Con-

* This regulation tends to prevent any small party of designing men from executing clandestine measures, as does the regulation which obliges every Conference to fix in the year preceding, the time of the meeting of the Conference in the year ensuing.

ference, until forty of the members thereof are assembled, unless reduced under that number by death since the prior Conference, or absence, as after-mentioned, nor until all the vacancies occasioned by death, or absence, shall be filled up by the election of new members of the Conference, so as to make up the number of one hundred, unless there be not a sufficient number of persons objects of such election: and during the assembly of the Conference there shall always be forty members present at the doing of any act, save as aforesaid, or otherwise such act shall be void.*

Fifth, The duration of the yearly assembly of the Conference shall not be less than five days, nor more than three weeks,† and be concluded by the appointment of the Conference, if under twenty-one days; or otherwise the conclusion thereof shall follow of course at the end of the said twenty-one days; the whole of all which said time of the assembly of the Conference shall be had, taken, considered, and be the yearly Conference of the people called Methodists, and all such acts of the Conference during such yearly assembly thereof shall be the acts of the Conference, and none others.

Sixth, Immediately after all the vacancies occasioned by death, or absence, are filled up by the election of new members as aforesaid, the Conference shall choose a president, and secretary of their assembly, out of themselves, who shall continue such until the election of another president or secretary, in the next or other subsequent Conference; and the said president shall have the privilege and power of two members in all acts of the Conference during his presidency, and such other powers, privileges and authorities, as the Conference shall from time to time see fit to entrust into his hands.

Seventh, Any member of the Conference absenting himself from the yearly assembly thereof for two years successively, without the consent or dispensation of the Conference, and being not present on the first day of

* Otherwise the Conference might continue to sit till the circuits were materially injured by the absence of so many of the preachers.

the third year assembly thereof, at the time and place appointed for the holding of the same, shall cease to be a member of the Conference from and after the said first day of the said third yearly assembly thereof, to all intent and purposes, as though he was naturally dead. But the Conference shall, and may dispense with, or consent to the absence of any member from any of the said yearly assemblies, for any cause which the Conference may see fit or necessary, and such member, whose absence shall be so dispensed with, or consented to by the Conference, shall not by such absence cease to be a member thereof.

Eighth,* The Conference shall and may expel, and put out from being a member thereof, or from being in connexion therewith, or from being upon trial, any person member of the Conference, admitted into connexion, or upon trial, for any cause which the Conference may see fit or necessary; and every member of the Conference so expelled and put out shall cease to be a member thereof to all intents and purposes, as though he was naturally dead. And the Conference immediately after the expulsion of any member thereof as aforesaid, shall elect another person to be a member of the Conference, in the stead of such member so expelled.

Ninth, The Conference shall and may admit into connexion with them, or upon trial, any person or persons whom they shall approve, to be preachers and expounders of God's holy word, under the care and direction of the Conference, the name of every such person or persons so admitted into connexion, or upon trial as aforesaid, with the time and degrees of the admission, being entered in the journals or minutes of the Conference.

Tenth, No person shall be elected a member of the Conference, who hath not been admitted into connexion with the Conference as a preacher and expounder of God's holy word, as aforesaid, for twelve months.

* This is only the power which Mr. Wesley has ever exercised, and must be invested in the Conference after his decease, to enable them to preserve the body pure.

Eleventh, The Conference shall not, nor may nominate or appoint any person to the use and enjoyment of, or to preach and expound God's holy word in any of the chapels and premises so given or conveyed, or which may be given or conveyed, upon the trusts aforesaid, who is not either a member of the Conference, or admitted into connexion with the same, or upon trial, as aforesaid; nor appoint any person for more than three years successively to the use and enjoyment of any chapels and premises already given, or to be given or conveyed upon the trusts aforesaid, except ordained ministers of the Church of England.

Twelfth, That the Conference shall and may appoint the place of holding the yearly assembly thereof at any other city, town, or place, than London, Bristol, or Leeds, when it shall seem expedient so to do.

Thirteenth, And, for the convenience of the chapels and premises already, or which may hereafter be given or conveyed upon the trusts aforesaid, situated in Ireland or other parts out of the kingdom of Great Britain, the Conference shall and may, when, and as often as it shall seem expedient, but not otherwise, appoint and delegate any member or members of the Conference, with all or any of the powers, privileges, and advantages herein before contained or vested in the Conference, and all and every the acts, admissions, expulsions, and appointments whatsoever of such member or members of the Conference so appointed and delegated as aforesaid, the same being put into writing, and signed by such delegate or delegates, and entered in the journals or minutes of the Conference, and subscribed, as after-mentioned, shall be deemed, taken, and be, the acts, admissions, expulsions, and appointments of the Conference, to all intents, constructions, and purposes whatsoever, from the respective times when the same shall be done by such delegate or delegates, notwithstanding any thing herein contained to the contrary.

Fourteenth, * All resolutions, and orders touching elections, admissions, expulsions, consents, dispensations, delegations, or appointments, and acts whatsoev-

* This regulation is necessary for the preservation of order

er, of the Conference, shall be entered and written in the journals or minutes of the Conference, which shall be kept for that purpose, publicly read, and then subscribed by the President and Secretary thereof for the time being, during the time such Conference shall be assembled; and when so entered and subscribed, shall be had, taken, received, and be the acts of the Conference; and such entry and subscription, as aforesaid, shall be had, taken, received, and be evidence of all and every such acts of the said Conference, and of their said delegates, without the aid of any other proof; and whatever shall not be so entered and subscribed, as aforesaid, shall not be had, taken, received, or be the Act of the Conference: and the said President and Secretary are hereby required and obliged to enter and subscribe as aforesaid, every act whatever of the Conference.

Lastly,* Whenever the said Conference shall be reduced under the number of forty members, and continue so reduced for three yearly assemblies thereof successively, or whenever the members thereof shall decline or neglect to meet together annually for the purposes aforesaid, during the space of three years, that then, and in either of the said events, the Conference of the people called Methodists shall be extinguished, and all the aforesaid powers, privileges, and advantages shall cease; and the said chapels and premises, and all other chapels and premises, which now are, or hereafter may be settled, given, or conveyed, upon the trusts aforesaid, shall vest in the trustees for the time being of the said chapels and premises respectively, and their successors for ever; *upon trust*, that they, and the survivors of them, and the trustees for the time being, do, shall, and may, appoint such per-

* By this rule care is taken, as far as possible, that the chapels be ever applied to their original design, as places of divine worship, as it enacts, That the Trustees respectively shall have full power to nominate preachers for the chapels for ever, if the members of the Conference so far neglect their duty, that forty of them be not assembled *for three years successively*, at the usual time of holding the Conference, and at the places appointed by the preceding Conferences.

son and persons to preach and expound God's holy word therein, and to have the use and enjoyment thereof for such time, and in such manner, as to them shall seem proper.

† Provided always, that nothing herein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to extinguish, lessen, or abridge the life estate of the said John Wesley, and Charles Wesley, or either of them, of and in any of the said chapels and premises, or any other chapels and premises wherein they the said John Wesley, and Charles Wesley, or either of them, now have, or may have, any estate or interest, power or authority whatsoever. In witness whereof the said John Wesley hath hereunto set his hand and seal, the twenty-eighth day of February, in the twenty-fourth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George the third, by the grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, king, defender of the faith, and so forth, and in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four. JOHN (Seal) WESLEY.

Sealed and delivered (being first duly stamped) in the presence of

WILLIAM CLULOW, Quality-Court, Chancery-lane, London.
RICHARD YOUNG, Clerk to the said William Clulow.

The above is a true copy of the original deed, which is enrolled in Chancery, and was therewith examined by us, WILLIAM CLULOW.
RICHARD YOUNG.

† It would not have been reasonable that Mr. Wesley should resign any of his powers during his life, who has been, under God, the father of the whole connexion. The word *life-estate*, which has been exceedingly misunderstood by many, and which is a common term in law, means no more than the exercise of all the powers during his life, which had been already vested in him by former deeds, or should be by future deeds. It was not in his power to give himself any further rights or privileges in the chapels, than those which the trust deeds of each chapel respectively invested him with. The clause amounts merely to a reservation of his former powers, and not to an addition of any new right or privilege whatsoever.

It was at this conference (1784,) that the term of the preachers' probation was altered from one to four years. It was also about this time that Methodism extended its benign influence to the Norman Isles. And about the same period, Mr. Wesley, assisted by other ministers, set apart Dr. Coke, and by him Mr. Asbury, to be bishops or superintendents, of what was henceforth termed the Methodist Episcopal Church in America: as also Thomas Vasey and Richard Whatcoat, to act as elders among them. He also abridged the liturgy of the Church of England, and recommended it to be used on Sundays, and for the elders to use that form in administering the Lord's Supper.

1785. On the 26th of July, this year, the forty-second conference began in London. About seventy preachers were present: and it was at this time that Mr. Wesley ordained preachers for Scotland. But I cannot say much for the success of this plan for Scotland.

About the same time there was an enlarged prospect of doing good in Newfoundland.

July 25, 1786, the forty-third conference was opened in Bristol. The question about remaining in union with the church, or separating from it, still agitated some of the preachers and societies: and the following regulations were agreed upon—"Quest. "In what cases do we allow of service in church hours?" Ans. 1. When the minister is a notoriously wicked man. 2. When he preaches Arianism or any other equally pernicious doctrine. 3. When there are no churches in the town sufficient to contain half the people, And, 4. When there is no church at all within two or three miles. And we advise every one who preaches in the church hours, to read the Psalms and lessons, with part of the church prayers.

It was at this conference that Mr. Wesley appointed Dr. Coke to visit the British dominions in America.—But the Dr. and the two missionaries destined for Nova Scotia, were constrained by contrary winds, to steer for the West Indies, and landed in Antigua, on Christmas-day. Dr. Coke very properly considered his being driven to the West Indies as providential: and subse-

quent events have proved it most eminently so. This was the grand introductory circumstance which paved the way for those missionary labours in those Islands which have been so abundantly owned of God. He left the two missionaries who were intended for Nova Scotia to labour in these Islands. Since that time the work has greatly increased there.

The 9th of August, 1786, Mr. Wesley paid a second visit to Holland, and returned September the 6th. His former visit was in 1783. He there found some truly pious people, to whom he preached several times, and rejoiced to find that genuine christianity was essentially the same in all countries.

July 31, and some following days, 1787, the forty-fourth conference was held in Manchester, it being the first held in that place during the last thirty years. Mr. Wesley had once before met a few of the preachers there, when the number of both preachers and people was small.

About this time Mr. Wesley ordained some preachers for England only. It seems as if he came at last to this settled opinion, that from the great variety of opinion among both preachers and people, as well as from the behaviour of many of the clergy, it would be *expedient* as well as *lawful*, that the ordinances should be administered to them who desired them. Meantime he took these steps, that there might be, after all, as near a conformity to the church of England as circumstances would admit. He was this year convinced, for the first time, that it was the safest way to license all our chapels and travelling preachers.

March 29, 1788, died Mr. Charles Wesley. He was a pious man, an able and useful preacher, and a most admirable writer of sacred poetry.

1788. The 29th of July, this year, the forty-fifth conference was held in London.

July 28, 1789, the forty-sixth conference began in Leeds. The most painful business of this conference was, respecting the chapel at Dewsbury. The trustees resisted the conference, and the conference resisted the trustees, till we lost the chapel, and religion received a wound in that place, though we got a new chapel. It was an unfortunate affair, and I think the trustees were

greatly to blame: and perhaps the business might have been managed better on the part of the conference.

July 27, 1790, and following days, the forty-seventh conference was held in Bristol. This was the last at which Mr. Wesley was present. There was nothing very remarkable at this conference, except that one of the preachers was fined 20*l.* for preaching out of doors in a neighbouring village.

To every lover of Methodism, and especially to all who venerate the memory of Mr. Wesley, it will be interesting to see the state of our connexion at the time that he was taken from us, and received to his great reward. The state of Methodism stood thus:

	Circuits.	Preachers.	Members.
In England, - - -	65	196	52,832
In Ireland, - - -	29	67	14,106
In Wales, - - -	3	7	566
In Scotland - - -	8	18	1,086
In the Isle of Man,	1	3	2,580
In the Norman Isles,	2	4	498
In the West India Isles,	7	13	4,500
In the British Dominions in America,	4	6	800
In the United States of America,	97	198	43,265
Total,	216	511	120,233

On Wednesday, March 2, 1791, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, Mr. Wesley departed this life, and entered into the joy of his Lord, whom he had so long loved and served. The request he had so often offered to God was fully granted. Often had he sung,

> "Till glad I lay this body down,
> Thy servant, Lord, attend;
> And O! my life of mercy crown
> With a triumphant end."

It would seem as if his Lord had said to him, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

When Mr. Wesley died, it was properly said, "A prince and a great man had fallen that day in Israel," 2 Sam. iii. 38. The word here rendered prince, some-

times means a leader, and sometimes a person of superior or princely qualities. And in both these views it fitly applied to Mr. Wesley.

Let us take an enlarged view of his character, and consider him,

1. As a man of good mental capacity. All whoever knew him, could not but discover that he had by nature a strong and clear understanding. Without good natural abilities, as a foundation, no education, however good, or long continued, can make an accomplished man. But,

2. Mr. Wesley had a liberal education. The advantages arising from the knowledge of languages, and of arts and sciences, he possessed in a high degree. And he well knew how to apply these to the most useful purposes as a minister of the gospel. His mind was richly furnished with the various branches of literature. He was well acquainted with the ancient as well as several modern languages. In the learned languages he was allowed, by the best judges, to be a critic. But it was *sacred* literature which most engaged his attention. He was a great proficient in the Hebrew language, and had read the Old Testament, in that language, with singular attention. And in Greek, the original language of the New Testament, he was an able critic, and so conversant with it, that many times when he was at a loss to repeat a passage out of the New Testament in the words of our common translation, he was never at a loss to repeat it in the original Greek, which made it evident, that the words and phrases of the original, were more familiar to him than the words of the English Bible.

3. He studied also the works of creation with great attention, as the five volumes which he published on natural philosophy will sufficiently evince.

4. The art of logic he had cultivated with much care, and in this science it has been generally acknowledged he was a master. But logic in his view of it, is not the art of wrangling, or making distinctions where there is no difference; but "The art of good sense; the art of comprehending things clearly; of

judging truly; and of reasoning conclusively; or, in another view of it, the art of learning and teaching."

5. As to morality and religion, his character was the very best. From his infancy he reverenced the name and the word of God. He habituated himself to attend to the ordinances of religion, and acted with the utmost conscientiousness and regularity as far as his understanding was informed.

All these properties tended to qualify him for inquiring after truth. And in consequence of making this inquiry in the most deep and serious manner, he was convinced that in *one* thing he was greatly *lacking*. And this thing was nothing less than the *one thing needful;* or genuine experimental Christianity. Notwithstanding all his attainments, as a linguist, a philospher, and a student in divinity; notwithstanding his knowledge and fluency on religious subjects; his alms-giving, his willingness to labour and suffer for the good of others, his self-denial, and taking up of his cross, this, he said he had learnt, that he had nothing in or of himself to plead, nor any hope, but that if he sought he should find Christ, and be found in him, not having on his own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.* And this opinion was not taken up hastily, but was the result of serious and mature inquiry, a conviction of mind, founded on scriptural and rational views of God and himself. He used great caution in making up his mind upon the different doctrinal subjects. He searched the scriptures, and exerted the utmost faculties of his reasoning powers. He was an advocate for the exercise of reason in matters of religion, observing, that both our Lord and his apostles reasoned continually with their opposers, and that the strongest reasoner he had ever observed, excepting only Jesus of Nazareth, was Paul of Tarsus; the man who left that plain direction for all Christians, "In malice, or wickedness, be ye children; but in understanding, or reason, be ye men."

His general view of religion, was agreeable to the na-

* See the conclusion of his first Journal.

ture of God and man, and their mutual relations. The outcry raised against him and his followers, as enthusiasts and fanatics was groundless, and was the offspring of prejudice and ignorance.

He viewed the gospel as a general display of the perfections of God, in which they sweetly harmonize, and shine forth with peculiar lustre. As a dispensation of mercy to men, holding forth a free pardon of sin to all who repent and believe in Christ. As enjoining universal holiness both in heart and life, being designed to regulate our affections, and govern our actions. The gospel holds forth blessings suited to our present state and necessities: wisdom to instruct us, grace to pardon and sanctify us; together with promises of help and protection through the snares and difficulties of life.

These views of the gospel Mr. Wesley published, and that with such energy as made a deep and lasting impression upon his hearers. And in explaining the *order* in which gospel blessings are bestowed, he displayed a mind well instructed. He showed that the first step towards being a Christian is to repent, and that in order to this the conscience must be awakened, and that till a man be convinced of the evil of sin, he will not depart from it; and that till he sees something beautiful in holiness, and desirable in being reconciled to God, the sinner is not duly prepared to receive the Lord Jesus Christ. Read Matt. xi. 17. Acts iii. 19.—xx. 20, 21.

After repentance towards God, the next step is faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, as the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, John i. 29. As the only and all-sufficient Saviour, Luke xix. 10. 1 Tim. i. 15. 1 Cor. i. 30.

Mr. Wesley accurately distinguished sanctification from justification; he showed that justification admits us into a state of grace and favour with God, into a state of fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ; that being justified our relation to God is altered, our sins are forgiven, and we are become children of God, and heirs of all the great and precious promises of the gospel. But he did not stop here, but inculcated the necessity of sanctification, nay, urging believers to go on to perfection, Heb. vi. 1,

2. This sometimes made even some pious persons, from mistaken views of his sentiments, raise a clamour against him. But he often and sufficiently explained his meaning, specifying that by perfection, he meant such a measure of love to God and man, and such an attachment to every thing that is lovely or of good report, that the heart will be averse to all evil, and readily disposed for every good word and work.

Mr. Wesley maintained that God is love, and therefore, he is loving unto every man, and his tender mercy is over all his works, Psalm cxlv. 9. He maintained that Christ died for all, that all are invited to come to him for salvation, and that whosoever thus cometh to him he will in no wise cast out. He maintained that a sufficiency of grace is given to all, and that while all the glory of the salvation of those who get to heaven will belong to God, the blame of the damnation of those who go to hell will wholly belong to themselves. On this account he was sometimes termed an Arminian. And some who used the term, attached ideas to it, that were far from being just respecting Mr. Wesley. Some suppose that as an Arminian, he preached salvation by works, and degraded Christ. But this was very erroneous. He preached the doctrine of free grace as much as any Calvinist, asserting that eternal life, and every degree of preparation for it, are all the free, undeserved gifts of God, Rom. vi. 23. Nevertheless, he insisted upon good works as the necessary and indispensable fruits of faith.

One point more must be briefly touched upon, I mean that of Christian experience. Many have supposed this to be mere imagination, and hence has arisen the charges of enthusiasm. But true Christian experience is real, and rests upon a foundation as solid as the evidence of our senses.

Christian experience, is knowledge founded upon experiment, and is the present possession of the benefits of the gospel, which tends to prepare us for the future enjoyment of that eternal rest which remaineth for the people of God. If we use the word in the most comprehensive sense, so as to include the receiving of Christ in his mediatorial offices, it will imply repen-

tance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and the various fruits of the Spirit, viz. love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, and temperance, Gal. v. 22, 23.

In the New Testament we read of persons who did experience the witness and fruits of the Spirit. And it is certain that *we* may experience these also, if we seek them in the way which God has appointed. The evidence which a man has who experiences these things is of the strongest kind. If a man's understanding be enlightened with gospel truths; if his conscience be awakened; if in consequence of this, he turns from his sins, is humbled and ashamed before God, and prays for mercy; is it possible that such a change as this should take place, in his views of himself, in the dictates of his conscience, and in his conduct, and he not know it? And when a person is enabled to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of his soul; to rest fully upon him for pardon and acceptance with God; such a person must be conscious of this act of his mind, and the change in his views of God, and the feelings of his mind that consequently follow. Will he not be as conscious and certain of these things as when he sees an object before him, or feels pleasure or pain? If he that believeth be filled with love, joy, peace, and the other fruits of the Spirit, must he not be certain of this? Our internal consciousness carries the same conviction of reality with it as our external senses. Would it not appear exceedingly absurd to you, if you heard a person say, that he loved an object dearly, but was not conscious of any love? That he rejoiced exceedingly in a thing, but that he did not feel any joy? In like manner, if believing in Christ, I feel peace, I cannot but know this; and if I look up to God through Jesus Christ with holy confidence, and feel joyful in his salvation, I must be conscious and certain of it. *Christian Experience*, then, as Mr. Wesley explained it for so many years, both in preaching and writing, has *certainty* in it: if a man has it he cannot be ignorant of it. But we must say, that those who have it not, cannot form a just conception of it. It is impossible for those who have not felt the peace of God to form a just notion of it. The evidence of this stands

on the same ground as the evidence of our external senses. If a man had never seen colours, he could not form any true idea of them. And if a man had never felt pain or pleasure, he could not be taught to understand what they are, however perfect his rational faculties might be. To *know* them he must *feel* them. It is just so in Christian experience. You must feel it, and then you will know what it is, and as easily distinguish it from the feelings or consciousness arising from other things, as you distinguish seeing from hearing, or touching from smelling.

Let us now glance at the *labours* of Mr. Wesley, and also the *effects* of them. From his earliest youth he was a person of the greatest diligence and industry. And when he became a preacher, and especially after he was more perfectly instructed in the genuine doctrines of the gospel, he was "instant in season, and out of season," being "in his labours more abundant than most ministers of the gospel." In him were united the necessary qualifications for useful study and active life. He preached in churches wherever he had an opportunity, not only in the commencement of what is termed Methodism, but to the conclusion of his long and laborious life. But in the beginning especially, the doctrines he preached offended some, and the attendant crowds raised envy and jealousy in others, so that most of the churches were soon shut against him. He then went out into the highways, as well as into the streets and lanes of cities, to invite sinners to come to the gospel feast. By this step, he at once abandoned every former prospect of ease, honour, and wealth: while nothing presented itself to his view, for this world, but labour and weariness, accompanied with contempt, reproach, and persecution. Most certainly nothing but a sense of duty could influence a man of such calm and deliberate reflection to take such a step. Mr. Wesley was *regular* and *steady* in his labours; and these labours were carried to an astonishing extent. He endured many hardships, and suffered much reproach. And, what to some may appear more than this, he kept regularly to his work, in defiance of the pleasure he found in reading and study, and the still more fascinating charms of rational and polite conversation.

For more than sixty years he constantly rose at four o'clock in the morning. The work of God, in which he was engaged, occupied his time and attention, and considering it as the great business of his life, he made every thing else subservient to it.

His industry was almost incredible, and perhaps without a parallel. Sixteen hours out of every twenty-four, from four in the morning till eight in the evening, his time was industriously employed in reading, writing, preaching, regulating the affairs of his societies, and travelling. During a few of his last years he travelled in a carriage, the expences of which were borne by a few friends. Prior to this, he travelled on horseback, and often for thirty, forty, or fifty miles in a day, besides preaching twice, thrice, or four times. If we consider the whole of his labours, and compare them with those of many other men who have been deemed industrious, we might almost say that he lived life twice or thrice over.

But what has attracted the most public attention are the *effects* of Mr. Wesley's labours. These, in conjunction with those of his brother Charles and Mr. Whitefield, and their helpers and successors, have had a most extensive influence on all denominations of professing Christians in the British empire, and the United States of America; and their influence, in some measure, has extended to various other nations. They have had, especially, no small influence on many ministers of the different denominations, in awakening their attention to the genuine essential doctrines of the gospel, and the duties of the Christian ministry, though some of these ministers have been ashamed to acknowledge it. At any rate, the labours of these men, and especially those of Mr. Wesley, have under God, produced the whole body of Methodists, now so numerous in Great-Britain and Ireland, in the West-Indies, and on the American continent. And wherever these are found, with very few, if any exceptions, they are more unblameable and exemplary in their conduct than they were before; breathe more of a true Christian spirit, and display more of genuine Christianity, than they ever did before, and that in every state, relation and condition in life. And

the Methodists are not only better *Christians* and *citizens* than they were before, but better *subjects* also. It is one rule of the society, that all the members of it shall yield subjection to the laws of the land, and render tribute to the state as required, avoiding smuggling and every practice of this sort.

In these labours of love, and productive of so many and so good effects, did Mr. Wesley spend between fifty and sixty years of his life.

His travels were incessant, and almost unparalleled. Without the greatest punctuality and care in the management of his time, he could not have gone through his abundant and diversified labours. But he had stated hours for every purpose, and he did not suffer one thing to interfere with another. Between nine and ten o'clock he regularly retired to rest, and rose soon after four in the morning; and no business, company, or conversation, could induce him to depart from his rules of conduct. He wrote, travelled, visited the sick, and did every thing else in hours appointed, which hours were inviolable. To ascertain the precise measure of Mr. Wesley's labours, would be an impossible task. His public ministrations were but a part of them. But from these, we may form some conception of the rest. For more than fifty years successively, he generally preached twice every day, and not unfrequently four or five times. To these may be added numberless exhortations addressed to the societies after preaching, with various other employments. The lowest calculation we can make of his travels will be four thousand miles annually, which in fifty-two years will make two hundred and eight thousand miles. And at the lowest computation in these fifty-two years, from 1739 to 1791, he could not preach fewer than forty thousand, four hundred and sixty sermons. He read a great deal as he travelled. Even when he travelled on horseback, which he did till he was very old, he would travel forty, fifty, or sixty miles a day, with a book in his hand.

To look at him he was a very slow writer. Yet, by constant, unwearied, and persevering application, what numbers of volumes did he publish! In addition to these

publications, perhaps he wrote a greater number of letters to the preachers, various members of the societies, and other persons, than were ever written by any man in the world.

No man could ever with greater propriety adopt the apostle's language, and say, "*Are they Apostles? I more, in labours more abundant.*" What man ever laboured so constantly, so abundantly, so unweariedly, and for so long a time, as Mr. Wesley? This his laboriousness sprung from a true and living faith, in the being and attributes of God, the truth and divinity of the scriptures, and in the Lord Jesus Christ. This faith wrought by love, purified the heart, overcame the world, and produced inward and outward holiness.—He walked worthy of the vocation wherewith he was called. A man so holy and unblameable, so laborious in the best of employments, and influenced by the purest, noblest motives, some might have supposed, would have glided through the world with honour, and that the world in general would have applauded and blessed him. But he found it necessary to remember the words of our Saviour, "Blessed are ye, when men revile you and persecute you, and say all manner of evil of you falsely, for my name's sake." A truly eminent man has a double character, being highly applauded by some, and grievously slandered by others. If universal approbation and applause had been to be secured by wisdom, by holiness, or any thing that is lovely, or of good report, surely Jesus Christ and his apostles, would have secured it. But this we know was not the case. They went through evil report as well as good report, and through dishonour as well as honour. And in this respect did Mr. Wesley drink largely of the cup which they drank of. Nay, it is remarkable, that he was reproached especially by the clergy, from the least even unto the greatest, from the needy curate, and half fledged youth, up to "doctor's grave, and prelates of threescore." Many of those said all manner of evil of him falsely. It is not difficult to accuse: but in point of proof, accusers are often found wanting. This was most remarkably the case with regard to the accusers of Mr. Wesley.

The only crime his accusers ever *proved*, was, "That he *laboured more*, and he was *more beloved*." But, we have before seen, in the brief account of the persecutions of the Methodists, that Mr. Wesley did not merely suffer reproach, but opposition in every possible form, and frequently from tumultuous mobs, when rude fellows, men of the baser sort, sons of Belial, opposed and vilified the right ways of the Lord. From these he was in perils in country towns and villages, and in the great and populous cities. It was not enough, that frequently he had no temple but the wide creation, no pulpit but a wall, a table, or a stone: no sounding board, but the canopy of Heaven; but mistaken mortals, for whose sake he had suffered the loss of all things, and for whose salvation he had consented to be vile in the eyes of the world, were often exceedingly mad against him, and would cry out, "Away with him, away with such a fellow from the earth." Yet none of these things moved him, neither counted he his life dear unto himself, so he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry he had received of the Lord Jesus. He was patient in doing well, and bearing ill; in all these things he was more than conqueror; and like the Captain of his salvation, was made perfect through suffering. But what was it which supported and cheered him under all these things? Why, the clear view he had of the vast importance of spiritual and eternal things; the great worth of an immortal soul; the joys of heaven, and the beauty of holiness. A full conviction that he was in the way of his duty; the approving testimony of his own conscience the success with which the Lord crowned his labours; and the good hope, through grace, which he had of an abundant and everlasting kingdom of our God and Saviour. Many have represented him as a man of slender capacity; but certainly with great injustice. His writings, and his controversial writings more especially, will fully prove the contrary. To this may be added the office he filled with such distinction at Oxford, and the great abilities which he displayed in the government of his preachers and people. As a writer, he possessed talents both from nature and education. What he was

as a preacher, may be gathered from the nine volumes of his sermons, which are in so many hands.

His attitude in the pulpit was graceful and easy; his action calm and natural, yet pleasing and expressive; his voice was not loud, but clear, agreeable, and masculine; and his style was neat, perspicuous, and pleasing.

When he had time to make proper preparation for the pulpit, he was admirable; when his numerous employments, and great fatigues in travelling, prevented this, he was sometimes not so excellent. Yet when fatigue of body, peculiar exercises of mind, or want of time for premeditation, caused him to fall short of his general excellence, the observation of Dr. Beattie, of Aberdeen, who heard him on one such occasion, was generally verified, "It was not a *masterly sermon*, yet none but a master could have preached it."

The figure of Mr. Wesley was remarkable. In person, he was rather below the middle size, but remarkably well proportioned. He had a good constitution, and seemed not to have the smallest quantity of superfluous flesh. In every period of his life, his habit of body was the reverse of corpulent, and was expressive of the strictest temperance, and constant exercise. He was muscular and strong, till a very few years before his death; had a firm step, and was a remarkably good walker. His face was remarkably fine even to old age; and the freshness of his complexion continued to the last week of his life: his whole countenance was remarkably expressive; few saw him without being struck with his appearance; and numbers, who had been greatly prejudiced against him, have conceived sentiments of esteem and veneration for him, as soon as they have been introduced into his presence. His face, for an old man, was one of the finest that ever was seen: he had a clear, smooth forehead, an aquiline nose, and an eye as bright and piercing as can be imagined. In his countenance and behaviour, there was an admirable mixture of cheerfulness and gravity.

In dress, he was a pattern of plainness and neatness. His coat was without a cape, and with a small upright collar; he wore a narrow plated stock about his neck, and no silk or velvet in any part of his apparel. And

not only in his person and dress, but in every thing he was a model of neatness. In his chamber and study, during the winter months, when he resided in London, his books, his papers, and every thing belonging to him, were in the most perfect order. He seemed to be always at home; and yet was always ready to start upon the longest journey.

In private he was cheerful and communicative; his conversation was pleasing, and frequently very instructive. He had been much accustomed to society; knew how to behave to different descriptions of people, and possessed and practised true politeness. He spoke a good deal in company in general; and the knowledge he had acquired by reading, travelling, and observation, he liberally communicated, and that in the most pleasing and attracting manner. The late celebrated Dr. Johnson was personally acquainted with him, and his judgment of Mr. Wesley's manner of conversation is left on record; he said, "Mr. Wesley's conversation is good; he talks well on any subject; I could converse with him all night."*

* The following letter will give the world a just notion of the high opinion which Dr. Johnson had of this extraordinary man.

"SIR,

"When I received your Commentary on the Bible, I durst not, at first, flatter myself that I was to keep it, having so little claim to so valuable a present; and when Mrs. Hall informed me of your kindness, was hindered from time to time from returning you those thanks which I now entreat you to accept.

"I have thanks likewise to return for the addition of your important suffrage to my argument on the American question. To have gained such a mind as yours may justly confirm me in my own opinion. What effect my paper has had upon the public I know not; but I have now no reason to be discouraged. The lecturer was surely in the right who, though he saw his audience slinking away, refused to quit the chair while Plato stayed.

"I am,

"Reverend Sir,

"Your most humble servant,

"SAM. JOHNSON."

Feb. 6, 1776.

He joined in all conversation that was unblameable, and his cheerfulness was remarkable, and continued to the end of his life. He generally concluded the conversation with two or three verses of a hymn, illustrating the subject of discourse.

His natural temper was warm and vehement. Religion had done much in correcting this, yet it was still visible. Persecution from without he bore without wrath, and, apparently, almost without feeling. But when he was opposed by his preachers or people, his displeasure was visible. But never did the sun go down upon his wrath, nor did he in this respect give place to the devil; generally it was over almost in a moment: he was easily pacified, and ready to forgive injuries and affronts. It has been said of him, that

> "He carrried anger as the flint bears fire:
> Which, much enforced, shows a hasty spark,
> And straight is cold again."

Of this imperfection, however, he was very sensible, and very readily acknowledged it, and sometimes asked forgiveness in such a spirit of genuine humility, as greatly affected those who witnessed it.

His liberality to the poor knew no bounds, but want of ability to help them more abundantly; after barely providing for his own wants, he devoted all the rest to the necessities of others. In mercy to the bodies of men, the philanthrophic Mr. Howard came the nearest to him of any of our day. Mr. Howard was the friend, acquaintance, and admirer of Mr. Wesley. And he was stimulated to a more vigorous prosecution of his own benevolent plan, by observing in the case of Mr. Wesley, what a single man might do by zeal and perseverance. To relieve and help the poor, was with him a luxury of life. He considered them as if they existed that the followers of Christ might have an opportunity of showing what benevolence they would show to their Divine Master had he been now upon earth.

Mr. Wesley, from the profits of his publications, &c. might have accumulated a large fortune; but he laid up his treasure not on earth, but in heaven. Whatever he received, and from whatever source, only went *through*

his hands, but did not remain *in* them. In the numerous chapels which were built for himself and his helpers to preach in, he neither secured nor claimed the least personal property: and when he displayed a zealous concern that these should be properly settled, it was not on account of any personal advantage, but that it should not be in the power of a few changeable, capricious individuals, to alienate these buildings from the purpose for which they were built.

When he felt the infirmities of extreme old age still increasing upon him, he would not omit any of his former duties, or exercises, but kept on till he dropt in the harness. His prayer continually was, "Lord, let me not live useless." And at every place, after he had given the society what he had desired them to consider as his last advice, *To love as brethren, to fear God, and honour the king;* he constantly gave out, and sung with the people,

"O that without a lingering groan,
I may the welcome word receive;
My body with my charge lay down,
And cease at once to work and live."

His prayer was granted: and he departed this life in joyful hope of a better.

The expiring patriarch Joseph said, "I die, but God *shall be* with you:" and Mr. Wesley's last words were, "The best of all is, God *is* with us." Which words are now the motto upon the official seal of the Conference.

A man of more extraordinary character than Mr. Wesley probably never lived upon this earth. He was a person of sincere, unaffected, and exemplary piety.—And for more than fifty years successively, his great and various labours were most astonishing. His travels, his studies, and his ministerial labours, were each of them, when taken separately, more than sufficient for any ordinary man. Few men could have endured to travel so much as he did, without either preaching, writing, or reading. Few could have endured to preach as often as he did, supposing they had neither travelled nor written books. And very few men could have written and published so many books as he did, though they had always avoided both preaching and travelling.

That which I think peculiarly characteristic of him, was his freedom from extremes, and his every excellence having its proper bounds. Hence,

1. He was neither a Pharisee nor an Antinomian; but his personal religion, and his religious system, were both evangelical and moral.

2. He was neither a latitudinarian nor a bigot. His own principles were fixed; and yet he was candid and liberal towards men whose sentiments were different from his.

3. There was in him an admirable mixture of the wisdom of the serpent, and the harmlessness of the dove.

4. He possessed, practised, and propagated, a religion that was neither formal nor superstitious, but both spiritual and rational.

5. Some persons are meek, but not courageous; others are courageous, but deficient in meekness; but he was both courageous and meek; and it is hard to say which of these virtues he most excelled in.

6. Some people's gravity sinks into dulness, while the vivacity of others degenerates into levity; but he was cheerful without being light, and grave without being sad.

7. His zeal was tempered with moderation, while his moderation was inspired with zeal. He was always employed, yea, always abounding in the work of the Lord, yet so managed himself and his work, as that he was still able to do to-morrow as he had done to-day, and this with very little variation for more than half a century.

In point of great, extensive, and long-continued usefulness, I believe no history furnishes a character equal to that of Mr. Wesley. And were it necessary, the truth of this testimony would be attested by thousands, and tens of thousands, for among the miners in Cornwall, the colliers about Kingswood and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and other reformed and regenerated sinners, in almost every city, town, and village in the united kingdom. Many have done excellently, but he excelled them all. And he laid such a foundation for the continuation of the work, that it is already more than doubled.

July 26, 1791, the forty-eighth conference assembled at Manchester, according to the appointment of the last conference.—More than two hundred preachers were present: and every one seemed sensible of the loss the connexion had sustained. Mr. Wm. Thompson was chosen president, and Dr. Coke secretary.

The sticklers for what was called the Old Plan, having printed and circulated their opinions and wishes, and vehemently urging a conformity to them, naturally provoked replies from those in different places, who wished to see something more conformable to their ideas of Christian liberty. Thus a dispute was created which continued for several years to convulse the societies, and to perplex and distress the preachers. To supply the want of Mr. Wesley's general superintendence, the plan of districts was adopted, making a number of circuits to compose a district; there being mostly not less than three, nor more than eight circuits in a district; in general there were five. England was divided into seventeen districts, Ireland into five, Scotland into two, and Wales formed but one. The Lord was better to us than our fears, and almost exceeded what we had ventured to hope. We broke up in peace and harmony, with cheering prospects, and thankful hearts.

On the 31st of July, 1792, our forty-ninth conference began in London: Mr. Alexander Mather, president, and Dr. Coke, secretary. Several circumstances contributed to make this an uncomfortable conference.—One was, the dispute with Dr. Whitehead, about writing the life of Mr. Wesley. After much of what was very unpleasant, the business ended in the publication of two separate lives of Mr. Wesley, one by Dr. Whitehead, and the other by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore.

At this time there was much uneasiness in the connexion, occasioned by contentions about the propriety or impropriety of having the service in church-hours, and the Lord's Supper administered among us in some places. Touching this last particular, the conference was much embarrassed. It was at last agreed to decide the matter by lot: and this decided, *that the Lord's Supper should not be administered in the societies for that year.* This was made known to the people by an ad-

dress, and was the first instance of the conference addressing the people. This has been done repeatedly since, and sometimes with good success.

The rules of the preachers' fund were considered, enlarged, and somewhat altered; meantime the annual subscription of each preacher to the fund was raised from half a guinea to a guinea.

Our fiftieth conference met in Leeds, and began business July 29, 1793: Mr. John Pawson, president, and Dr. Coke, secretary. This conference came to the determination, that the societies should have the Lords's Supper where they unanimously desired it.

July 28, 1794, and some following days, the fifty-first conference was held in Bristol: Mr. Thomas Hanby, president, and Dr. Coke, secretary.

Several things caused this to be an unpleasant conference. Trustees from many of the principal societies assembled in Bristol, at the same time as the conference. Their addresses, and the negociations we thought proper to enter into with them, were productive of many difficulties.

During the ensuing year, the connexion was generally and greatly convulsed. The chief part of these agitations sprung, either immediately or remotely, from the following circumstance. The trustees of the Old Room, and of Guinea-street chapel, in Bristol, were exceedingly averse to any deviation from what was termed *The Old Plan.* The Lord's-Supper, and service in church hours, had been recently introduced, in a new place called Portland chapel, in the suburbs of the city. And one of the preachers appointed for that circuit, being friendly to this alledged innovation, the trustees before-mentioned resolved upon strong measures. Accordingly, they employed an attorney to write to him, charging him *at his peril, not to trespass on their premises*, as *they had not appointed him to preach therein*, and because *no other person had any authority so to do.* This, if submitted to, would have created a precedent, which might have subjected many other preachers to a similar discharge from different pulpits, by the authority of a few hostile men, without a trial, or even an accusation, and contrary to the judgment

and wishes of the chief part of the people, both in the town and circuit, as was the case in this instance.— This measure occasioned a great struggle, in which the chief part of the whole connexion, in some measure, partook. But the cause of the trustees was indefensible, though some attempted to defend them, and a majority of both preachers and people declared against them. This discomfited and confounded the party, and prevented worse consequences which would have followed, and that upon a general scale.

July 27, 1795 the fifty-second conference began at Manchester: Mr. Joseph Bradford, president, and Dr. Coke, secretary. The first day was employed in fasting and prayer, that the Almighty would enable us to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Nor did we ask in vain. The next morning it was agreed, to choose by ballot a committee of nine preachers, to form a plan of pacification, in order to put an end to the present disputes, and prevent the like in future.— This plan was accepted by the conference, with some modifications, and was agreed to also by a large majority of the trustees who were assembled at the same time and place, from various parts of the connexion. See the plan of pacification in the Minutes of 1795.

1796. On July 26, this year, the fifty-third conference commenced its sittings in London: Mr. Thomas Taylor president, and Dr. Coke secretary.

The most notable act of this conference was the expulsion of Alexander Kilham, for divers things which he had lately published in a pamphlet, called "The Progress of Liberty," and others of the like nature and tendency. In many respects, his conduct in these publications was unjustifiable. Afterwards in the pulpits of dissenters, where he gained admission, and from the press, he endeavoured to justify his conduct, and to bring the preachers into contempt with the Methodists, and with all men. But his race was soon run, for December 20, 1798, he died of a short illness, occasioned by a bone sticking in his throat. Prior to this, however, he had effected great divisions in various parts of our connexion.

July 31, 1797, the fifty-fourth conference began its

sittings in Leeds; Dr. Coke, president, and Mr. Samuel Bradburn, secretary.—During the year preceding, great preparations had been made for a considerable division of the societies, especially in the Leeds, Sheffield, Stockport, Manchester, Huddersfield, and Nottingham circuits. About five thousand became a separate party. For fear of a larger division, the conference agreed to make considerable sacrifices, the preachers resigning considerable portions of powers respecting temporal matters, division of circuits, receiving and excluding members, the appointment and removal of leaders, stewards, and local preachers. It is doubtful whether the concessions made were not something larger than will be for the general good, and more than scripture and reason will justify.

July 30, 1798, the fifty-fifth conference began in Bristol: Mr. Joseph Benson, president, and Mr. Samuel Bradburn, secretary.—Very little that was either new or extraordinary occured at this conference.

During the preceding year, the Methodists in Ireland had been greatly distressed by the savage rebellion in that country. Their address to the English conference said, "Loss of trade, breach of confidence, fear of assassination, towns burnt, countries laid waste, houses for miles without an inhabitant, the air tainted with the stench of thousands of putrid carcases, form some outlines of the melancholy picture of our times." Many of our people, and some of the preachers, were exposed to considerable sufferings. The English conference so sympathized with their Irish brethren, that they agreed the wants of Ireland should be supplied before those of England.

July 29, 1799, the fifty-sixth conference opened at Manchester: Mr. Samuel Bradburn, president, and Dr. Coke, secretary.—It was a conference of great peace. We were, however, greatly embarrassed for want of money to meet the deficiencies and distresses of many brethren. And there was no resource but the making an extraordinary collection in the different circuits.

Let us again survey the state of the connexion in respect to number of circuits, preachers and members:

	Circuits.	Preachers.	Members.
In England, - -	107	288	84,429
In Ireland, - -	34	83	16,227
In Scotland, - -	6	16	1,117
In Wales, - -	5	11	1,195
In the Isle of Man, -	1	4	4,100
In the Norman Isles,	1	7	734
In the West Indies,	13	23	11,170
In the British Dominions in America, -	13	8	1,610
In the United States of America, - -	109	400	60,169
Total,	360	940	180,751

July 28, 1800, the fifty-seventh conference began in London: Mr. James Wood, president, and Mr. Bradburn secretary. This conference recommended to the quarterly meetings, where it was not already done, to raise the preacher's quarterly allowance to four pounds. And it was also remarkable for a Loyal Address to the King, which the London Gazette, of August 8, 1800, said, "His Majesty was pleased to receive very graciously."

July 27, 1801, the fifty-eighth conference began in Leeds: Mr. John Pawson, president, being the second time he was chosen to this office, and Dr. Coke, secretary.

At this conference, it was determined that a general public collection should be made for the missions, which had chiefly till now been supported by private subscriptions. And it was now agreed also, that all our ordinary deficiencies should be paid at the district-meetings. The conference broke up above seventeen hundred pounds in debt, after having drawn a large sum from the Book-room, owing to the large demands made upon it by the poorer circuits.

1802. The fifty-ninth conference sat July 26, in Bristol. A few cases of impropriety had been pointed out, which induced the conference to make the following resolutions:

1. We exhort the preachers' wives to dress as be-

cometh those who profess to walk with God; and we direct their husbands to use all the influence of love and piety in this behalf.

2. We insist upon it, that the preachers set the best example in dress and every thing.

3. We recommend our people to kneel at prayer.

4. To stand while singing.

5. Let preachers' wives and children attend the preaching at every opportunity.

This conference determined also, that preachers proposed to travel, should be examined before the brethren at the district meetings, and passed many useful and necessary regulations in respect to the West India Missionaries.

At this conference Mr. Joseph Taylor was the president, and Dr. Coke was the secretary.

July the 25th, 1803, the sixtieth annual conference began in Manchester: Mr. Joseph Bradford, president, (this being the second time of his election to that office,) and Dr. Coke, secretary. This conference declared very strongly against exhorters or local preachers getting licences to escape parish offices, or being balloted to serve in the militia. See the General Rules.

July 30, 1804, the sixty-first conference began in London: Mr. Henry Moore, president, and Dr. Coke, secretary. This year a committee was appointed to manage the missions, whereas formerly they had been chiefly managed by Dr. Coke: and the doctor was appointed General Superintendent of all our missions. This conference, convinced that individuals petitioning for preachers had a direct tendency to destroy, by degrees, the itinerant plan, resolved that no petition be attended to, but what comes from a regular quarterly meeting.

July 29, 1805, the sixty-second conference began at Sheffield, being the first ever held in this town; Dr. Coke, president, and Mr. Joseph Benson, secretary.—This was a notable conference, and made some excellent rules, and some of an inferior nature.* It was agreed, that the district committees should not meddle

* See the business of a conference in the chapter on Discipline.

with stationing the preachers; that no letters concerning stations should be regarded, except what came from a majority at a regular quarterly meeting; and that letters coming from committees should have no more attention paid to them than those coming from individuals; but that letters from the quarterly meetings, should be read in the stationing committee, and then in the conference.

This conference commiserated poor preachers with families, stationed in poor circuits, and recommended all the circuits to give them a regular weekly board. This conference concluded above 800*l* in debt.

July 28, 1806, the sixty-third annual conference began in Leeds: Mr. Adam Clarke, president, and Dr. Coke, secretary. The most notable transaction of this conference was the expulsion of Mr. Joseph Cook. He had been accused at the conference preceding this, of holding and preaching unsound doctrines, particularly respecting the nature of faith, and the witness of the Spirit. A year was allowed him to reconsider the matter, and then to give in his sentiments: in the mean time he was requested to keep his peculiar notions to himself, which he promised to do. But in a few months after, he published two sermons on these subjects. Many still wished to save him; but he was so obstinate, that without great inconsistency and impropriety, the conference could not continue to employ him. He settled in Rochdale, and soon finished his course, dying in March, 1811.

July 27, 1807, the sixty-fourth conference began in Liverpool, which was the first time of a conference being held there, Mr. John Barber, president, and Dr. Coke, secretary. Some important rules were passed, admirably calculated to preserve a purity of doctrine and morals in the connexion, among which is the following. "No person shall, on any account, be permitted to retain any official situation in our societies, who hold opinions contrary to the total depravity of human nature, the divinity and atonement of Christ, the influence and witness of the Holy Spirit, and Christian holiness, as believed by the Methodists."

It was expected that we should have seriously and maturely considered some previous discussions of the different district meetings on the subject of a plan for educating the young preachers; and also respecting articles of faith, or a summary of our doctrines, which it was proposed to prepare and publish. But for these things we found no time.

This conference wisely enforced a former rule, "That no charge brought by one preacher against another in the same district, shall be heard in the conference, unless previously explained at the district meeting, if the matter alledged in such charge was then in existence; and that all charges shall be previously announced, personally, or in writing, to the brother against whom they are directed."

It was agreed at this conference, also, that a collection should be made in all our congregations for the support of that excellent institution, *The British and Foreign Bible Society*, which was done accordingly, and amounted to about 1,300*l.**

July 25, 1808, the sixty-fifth conference commenced its labours in Bristol, Mr. James Wood, president, and Dr. Coke, secretary. This conference was a very laborious one to those who took the most active part in its business. We sat close; we were about two hundred and fifty preachers; and some part of the time the weather was extremely hot. But a conference more free from all undue influence and party-spirit, where more impartiality, free discussion, good temper, and general satisfaction prevailed, we never had.

On Monday, July 31, 1809, our sixty-sixth conference began in Manchester, and continued till Thursday, August the 17th. We had many things which called for thankfulness: but upon the whole it was rather a trying, as well as tedious conference. Mr. Thomas Taylor was the president, and Mr. Joseph Benson the secretary.

The state of our finances at this time was truly alarming, as we found a deficiency in the contingent fund of 3,019*l.* 1*s.* 6*d.* This gave occasion to the conference

* See Methodist Magazine for 1808.

to resolve, that no larger sum than *thirty pounds* shall ever be allowed for furniture to any one house; that the yearly subscription, after being made as usual in the classes, shall be mentioned in our principal congregations, that such of our hearers as are not in society, and wish to be *fellow-helpers to the truth*, may have an opportunity; and that before the deficiencies brought from any circuit be paid at the district meeting, inquiry shall be made whether such circuit has complied with our rules respecting contributions, by raising *on the average*, one penny per week, and one shilling per quarter for each member. If it appear that the rules have not been complied with, the payment of the deficiencies must be suspended, and the case submitted to the decision of the conference.

It was agreed also, that the district meetings shall present a plan to the conference for stationing the children, to enable the conference to determine what number shall be supported by each circuit. But, though this plan has repeatedly been agreed upon, the execution of it is still delayed.

To prevent any local preacher from getting licensed with a view to escape parish-officers and the militia, the conference determined, that any person who applies for a license, without the previous knowledge and consent of the superintendent and his colleagues, and of the local preachers, or quarterly meeting of the circuit in which he resides, shall not be suffered to preach among us.

The conference also strongly recommended to all Methodist families, to set apart some time every Lord's day for catechising and instructing their children.

It will not be foreign to the subject under consideration, to mention the following affair. It is well known to many, that when Mr. Kilham and his party separated from the connexion, they took possession of several of our chapels, though they were settled upon the *conference plan*. After enduring this outrageous wrong for some years, it was determined to make an appeal to the court of Chancery, selecting the case of Brighouse chapel, near Halifax, principally with a view to try the general question. On the 5th day of March, 1810, the cause was heard and determined before the Master of

the Rolls. It was decreed, "That, as what was now called in the pleadings, for the sake of distinction, The old conference was the only conference which existed at the time of the execution of the trust-deed, and for many years afterward, it must be determined to be that conference only which was referred to in the deed.—And as the trustees had not reserved, by any clause in the deed, power of making new regulations, by any decision of a majority of themselves, they must be compelled to execute the trust according to the laws and regulations of that conference, for the use of which they held the trust-estate, and admit those preachers only who were sent by the old conference." This decision is of the more importance, as there are several other chapels in the same circumstances.

A Copy of the minutes of the Decree made by the Master of the Rolls.

Monday, March 5th, 1810.

Attorney General *ver.* Pratt.

"Declare that the indenture, bearing date the 5th of July, 1795, in the pleadings stated ought to be established, and the trusts thereof performed and carried into execution; and that the chapel in the pleadings mentioned, and the affairs thereof ought to be regulated under, and by virtue of the terms of the before-mentioned indenture; and let the defendants, Joseph Pratt, James Avison, John Sowden, and John Booth, permit and suffer the person or persons as shall be nominated and appointed by the yearly conference, mentioned and referred to in the said deed, and under the pleadings called the Old Conference, to enter into, and upon, have, use, and enjoy the said chapel for the several purposes in the said indenture of the 5th day of July, 1795, particularly mentioned; and refer it to the Master to take an account of the rents of the several pews, seats, and other profits of the said chapel, and the premises in the said indenture mentioned, come to the hands of the said defendants, Joseph Pratt, James Avison, John Sowden, and John Booth, and of the application thereof. In the

taking of which account the said Master is to make unto the parties such allowance for what has been already paid to the officiating minister, for the duty done in the said chapel: and the said Master is to inquire and state to the court what monies have been laid out and advanced by the plaintiff, John Sharp, for the building of the three messuages in the pleadings mentioned, and of the interest accrued due thereon, and under what agreement such monies were so laid out; and for the better taking of the said accounts, and discovery of the matters aforesaid, the parties are to produce before the said Master upon oath, all books, papers, and writings in their custody, or power, relating thereto, and are to be examined upon interrogatories, as the said Master shall direct, who in taking of the said accounts, is to make unto the parties all just allowances, and reserve the consideration of the costs of this suit, and of all further directions, until after the Master shall have made his report, and any of the parties are to be at liberty to apply to this court, as there shall be occasion."

The comparative increase of the members of the societies, and that of the itinerant preachers, during the last thirty-nine years:

Years.	Preachers.	Members.
1770	120	29,406
1780	171	44,830
1790	291	71,568
1799	400	107,752

N. B. 159,500 of these members are in the United States of America; the rest in Great-Britain, and other parts of the British dominions. Note also, that the itinerant preachers in the United States of America are not numbered. These, I presume, will amount at least to 600. What hath God wrought!

In the year 1810, there was an increase in the societies in Great-Britain and Ireland, and also in America, of near 20,000 in the whole.

Having finished the brief chronological sketch of the history of the Methodists, I think it may be proper, as it will be pleasant, and profitable to many of my readers,

to have some characteristic, as well as historical accounts of preachers, who, having finished their course, are gone to receive that crown of righteousness which fadeth not away.

I have already given a short character, as well as history of Mr. John Wesley. I shall now give

A Short Account of Mr. Charles Wesley.

He was born the 18th of December, in the year 1708, being about five years younger than his brother John, and sixteen younger than Samuel. He was born several weeks before the proper time, and appeared rather dead than alive.

He received the first rudiments of his learning at home, from his mother, as all her other children did.

In 1716 he was sent to Westminster School, and placed under the care of his brother, who was usher there. Samuel was a high-churchman, and instilled the same principles into Charles.

During his stay at school, a gentleman of large fortune in Ireland wrote to his father, and asked if he had a son named Charles, and said, if he had he would make him his heir. And for several years Charles's education was regularly paid for by a gentleman in London, doubtless by order of this Irish Mr. Wesley. One year a stranger called to see him, probably this gentleman himself, talked largely with him, and asked him if he was willing to go to Ireland.—Charles wrote to his father, who left him to his own choice. He chose to stay in England. The gentleman then found and adopted another Charles Wesley. From this root sprang the present family, who, by some alteration, are denominated W—ll—sl—s.

In 1721, Charles was admitted a scholar at St. Peter's College, Westminster. In 1726, he was elected to Christ's Church, Oxford, at the same time that his brother John was Fellow of Lincoln College. "My first year at College." said he, "I lost in diversions; the next I set myself to study. Diligence led me into serious thinking: I went to the weekly sacrament, and persuaded two or three young students to accompany

me, and observe the *method of study* prescribed by the university. This gained me the harmless name of *Methodist*." Does it not appear from these words of his, that the term Methodist really originated in their rigid adherence to this *method* of study? It was easy and natural to give the termination *ist* to *method*, and so to denominate an observer of method, *Methodist*. Meantime the natural association of ideas would bring to remembrance, at least in those readers of Roman history, whose memories were tenacious and quick, that description of physicians who were called Methodists.

It was in the year 1728, and in the twentieth year of his age, that he began to apply more closely to study, and to be more serious and circumspect in his general deportment. He became zealous for God, and in his endeavours to do good for men, both to their bodies and souls.

He proceeded to be Master of Arts in the usual course, and thought of nothing but of spending all his days at Oxford, as a tutor in the university. Entering into holy orders he exceedingly dreaded. But in 1735, his brother John had such influence over him, as to prevail upon him to receive ordination, and to accompany him to Georgia, in North America. Afterwards, he was chiefly employed in travelling with his brother through different parts of Great-Britain and Ireland; and in preaching, and assisting to form and instruct the several Methodist societies.

His preaching, especially in his younger days, was frequently attended with extraordinary power, and many were convinced of sin, and brought truly to repent, and savingly to believe. He married Miss Sarah Gwynne, a person of respectable family connexions, in the county of Brecon, in South Wales; and after this, he chiefly divided his time between Bristol and London, where he was very useful in the conversion and spiritual profit of many souls. As a preacher, he was mighty in the scriptures, and possessed a remarkable talent of uttering the most striking truths with simplicity, brevity, and energy. As a poet, he was most excellent. He wrote the chief part of the hymns that are in our large hymn-book, and in general use in our congregations, and many

volumes of sacred poetry besides. He enjoyed but a poor state of health during most of his life. He brought this on by too much study and abstinence at Oxford. In his last sickness he was reduced to extreme weakness. But he was filled with humility and resignation. He had no transports of joy, but a good hope and unshaken confidence in Christ, which kept his mind in perfect peace. He died, March 29, 1738, aged seventy-nine years and three months.

When near death, and when scarcely able to articulate his words, his poetic spirit made its last effort in the following lines, which Mrs. Wesley wrote as he dictated:

> "In age and feebleness extreme,
> Who shall a sinful worm redeem?
> Jesus, my only hope thou art,
> Strength of my failing flesh and heart:
> O could I catch a smile from thee,
> And drop into eternity."

The Character of the Rev. Mr. FLETCHER

Has been given by Mr. Wesley, in a book written soon after his death. Afterwards, Mr. Gilpin wrote some notes on his character. And lately, Mr. Benson has compiled a life of him from all that had been published before, with much additional matter. He was, indeed, a most extraordinary man; a Christian *like him* the world has seldom seen; and a preacher, and especially a writer, whose transcendent excellencies my pen cannot fully describe. He was born at Nyon, in Switzerland, September 12, 1729, of an ancient and honourable family. He was ordained for the Christian ministry in 1757; was made vicar of Madely, in Shropshire, in the year 1760; and died there, August 14, 1785, where his name will be had in lasting remembrance.

At the conclusion of his account of this very eminent man, Mr. Wesley says, "I was intimately acquainted with him for thirty years. I conversed with him morning, noon, and night, without the least reserve, during a journey of many hundred miles: and in all that time I never heard him speak an improper word, or saw him

do an improper action. Within fourscore years I have known many excellent men, holy in heart and life; but one equal to him I have not known. One so uniformly devoted to God, so unblameable a man in every respect I have not found either in Europe or America. Nor do I expect to find such another on this side of eternity."

His death was suitable to his life. The Rev. Mr. Gilpin, vicar of Wrockwardine, a few miles from Madeley, gives some very interesting particulars respecting his dissolution, in the biographical notes which he has added to Mr. Fletcher's "Portrait of St. Paul."—"Equally prepared for every event, he met his last great trial with all that composure and steadiness which had invariably distinguished him upon every former occasion of suffering. He entered the valley of the shadow of death as one who feared no evil. He considered it as the high road to that incorruptible inheritance which is reserved for the saints: and looking forward with a hope full of immortality, he saw beyond its limited gloom, those everlasting hills of delight and glory, to which his soul aspired."

"A few days before his dissolution, he appeared to have reached that desirable point, where the last rapturous discoveries are made to the souls of dying saints. Roused, as it were, with the shouts of angels, and kindled into rapture with visions of glory, he broke into a song of holy triumph, which began and ended with the praises of God's unfathomable love. He laboured to declare the secret manifestations he enjoyed, but his sensations were too powerful for utterance; and after looking inexpressible things, he contented himself with calling upon all around him, to celebrate and shout out that *adorable love*, which can never be fully comprehended, or adequately expressed.

"This triumphant frame of mind was not a transient feeling, but a state that he continued to enjoy, with little or no discernible intermission to the moment of his death. While he possessed the power of speech, he spake as one whose lips had been touched with *a live coal from the altar;* and when deprived of that power, his countenance discovered that he was sweetly engaged in the contemplation of eternal things.

"On the day of his departure, as I was preparing to attend my own church, which was at the distance of nine miles from Madeley, I received a hasty message from Mrs. Fletcher, requesting my attendance at the vicarage. I instantly followed the messenger, and found Mr. Fletcher with every symptom of approaching dissolution upon him. I had ever looked up to this man of God with an extraordinary degree of affection and reverence; and on this afflicting occasion, my heart was uncommonly afflicted and depressed. It was now in vain to recollect that public duty required my presence in another place: unfit for every duty, except that of watching the bed of death, I found it impossible to withdraw myself from the solemn scene to which I had been summoned. I had received from this evangelical teacher, in days that were past, many excellent precepts with respect to *holy living;* and now I desired to receive from him the last important lesson with respect to *holy dying*. And truly this concluding lesson was of inestimable worth; since so much patience and resignation, so much peace and composure, were scarcely ever discovered in the same circumstances before.—*Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.*

"While their pastor was breathing out his soul into the hands of a *faithful Creator*, his people were offering up their joint supplications on his behalf in the house of God. Little, however, was seen among them on this trying occasion, but affliction and tears. Indeed it was a day much to be remembered, for the many affecting testimonies which appeared on every side. The whole village wore an air of consternation and sadness: and not one joyful song was heard among all its inhabitants. Hasty messengers were passing to and fro, with anxious inquiries and confused reports. And the members of every family sat together in silence that day, awaiting with trembling expectation the issue of every hour.

"After the conclusion of the evening service, several of the poor, who came from distant parts, and who were usually entertained under Mr. Fletcher's roof, still lingered about the house, and seemed unable to bear themselves away from the place, without a sight of

their expiring pastor. Secretly informed of their desire, I obtained for them the permission they wished. And the door of the chamber being set open, immediately before which Mr. Fletcher was sitting upright in his bed, with the curtains undrawn, unaltered in his usual venerable appearance; they slowly moved, one by one, along the gallery, severally pausing as they passed by the door, and casting in a look of mingled supplication and anguish. It was an affecting sight to behold these unfeigned mourners successively presenting themselves before the bed of their dying benefactor, with an inexpressible eagerness in their looks; and then dragging themselves away from his presence, with a distressing consciousness *that they should see his face no more.*

"And now the hour speedily approached that was to put a solemn termination to our hopes and fears. His weakness very perceptibly increased, but his countenance continued unaltered to the last. If there was any visible change in his feelings he appeared to be more at ease, and more sweetly composed, as the moment of his dismission drew near. Our eyes were riveted upon him in awful expectation. But whatever we had felt before, no murmuring thought was suffered, at this interesting period, to darken the glories of so illustrious a scene. All was silence—when the last angelic messenger suddenly arrived, and performed his important commission, with so much stillness and secrecy, that it was impossible to determine the exact moment of its completion. Mrs. Fletcher was kneeling by the side of her departing husband; one who attended him with uncommon assiduity during the last stages of his disorder, sat at his head; while I sorrowfully waited near his feet. Uncertain whether or not he was totally separated from us, we pressed nearer, and hung over his bed in the attitude of listening attention: his lips ceased to move, and his head was gently sinking on his bosom—we stretched out our hands; but his warfare was accomplished, and the happy spirit had taken its everlasting flight."

In the same biographical notes, Mr. Gilpin has favoured the world with some very striking characteristic traits of Mr. Fletcher. He informs us, that he

passed the earlier part of his life at Nyon, where he soon discovered an elevated turn of mind, accompanied with an unusual degree of vivacity. After having made a good proficiency in school learning, he was sent to Geneva, where he was distinguished equally by his superior abilities and his uncommon application.—The two first prizes for which he stood candidate, he carried away from a number of competitors, several of whom were nearly related to the professors: and on these occasions he was complimented by his superiors in a very flattering manner. During his residence at Geneva, he allowed himself but little time, either for recreation, refreshment, or rest.—Here he laid the foundation of that extensive and accurate knowledge, for which he was afterwards distinguished, both in philosophical and theological researches. After quitting Geneva, he was sent by his father to Lenzbourg, a small town in the Swiss Cantons, where he not only acquired the German language, but diligently prosecuted his other studies, for which he ever discovered a passionate attachment. On his return from this place, he continued some time at home, studying the Hebrew language, and perfecting his acquaintance with mathematical learning.

His early piety was equally remarkable. From his childhood he was impressed with a deep sense of the majesty of God, and a constant fear of offending him. His acquaintance with the scriptures guarded him, on the one hand, from the snares of infidelity; and preserved him on the other, from many vices peculiar to youth. His conversation was modest, and his whole conduct marked with a degree of rectitude, not usually to be found in early life. He manifested an extraordinary turn for religious meditation; and those little productions which gained him the greatest applause, at this period, were chiefly of a religious tendency. His filial obedience, and brotherly affection, were exemplary; nor is it remembered, that he ever uttered one unbecoming expression in either of those characters—And he was a constant reprover of sin.

But notwithstanding all these external appearances of piety, Mr. Fletcher remained for many years in ig-

norance respecting the nature of scriptural Christianity. He was naturally of a high and ambitious turn of mind, and counted much upon the dignity of human nature; and being admired by his friends, it is not to be wondered at that he should cast a look of self-complacency upon himself. He was a stranger to that unfeigned sorrow for sin, which is the first step towards the kingdom of God. He had resided some time in England before he became properly acquainted with himself, and the nature of true religion. In the twenty-sixth year of his age, he was so filled with self-abhorrence, as to place himself on a level with the chief of sinners. But his sorrow for sin was succeeded by a consciousness of the favour of God, and he was filled with peace and joy in believing. Having found Jesus to be a Saviour, he determined to follow him as a guide. From this period he became truly exemplary for Christian piety. He appeared to enjoy uninterrupted fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Every day was with him a day of solemn self-dedication, and every hour an hour of praise and prayer.

Mr. Fletcher seemed to be familiar with *things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1. He *walked as seeing him who is invisible, and sat in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.* To those who were much conversant with him, he appeared almost as an inhabitant of a better world: the common lights of Christians were eclipsed before him; and even his religious friends, could never stand in his presence, without being overwhelmed with a consciousness of their own inferiority. While they saw him rising, as it were, on the wings of an eagle, they were humbled at their inability to pursue his flight; and his frequent expressions of fervent love and gratitude to God, made them ashamed of their own lukewarmness and ingratitude. *When he went out through the city*, or took his seat in the company of the righteous, he was saluted with unusual reverence, as an angel of God. *The young men saw him and hid themselves; and the aged arose and stood up.* Even those who were honoured as princes among the people of God, *refrained talking, and laid their hand upon their mouth. When the ear heard him, then it blessed him; and when the eye saw him, it*

gave witness to him. Sitting in the house, or walking by the way; in retirement, or in his public labours, he was uniformly actuated by the same spirit. In all he said and did, in all the circumstances of life, it appeared that his heart and his treasure were in heaven.

HIS EPITAPH.

Here lies the Body of
The Rev. JOHN WILLIAM de la FLECHERE,
Vicar of Madeley,
Who was born at Nyon, in Switzerland,
September the 12th, 1729,
And finished his Course, August the 14th, 1785;
In this Village;
Where his unexampled Labours
Will long be remembered.
He exercised his Ministry for the space of
Twenty-five Years,
In this Parish,
With uncommon Zeal and Ability.
Many believed his Report, and became
His Joy and Crown of Rejoicing;
While others constrained him to take up
The Lamentation of the Prophet,
"All the day long have I stretched out my Hands
Unto a disobedient and gainsaying People:
Yet surely my Judgment is with the Lord,
And my Work with my God."
"He being dead yet speaketh."

The writer of this publication, spent two years at and about Madeley, commencing about twelve years after his death; and he found that his name was still as ointment poured forth. And as every thing is interesting that respects Mr. Fletcher, I shall be excused for inserting a few lines more about him, especially as what I shall write will be additional to all that has been published before. I had my information from the very best authorities.

Some of the Methodists at Coalbrook-dale told me, that their chapel was enlarged a little before Mr. Fletcher's death. The morning they began to get the stones for the enlargement, he came by the quarry just as they were beginning to work. He *would* have the honour of doing something in this business of enlarging the house of prayer. "But first," said he, "let us pray." So they all kneeled down upon the rock; Mr. Fletcher prayed like himself; and then he assisted them in getting stones, till more urgent concerns called him to depart.

I was also very credibly informed, at Broseley, about three miles from Madeley that about the time Mr. Fletcher was writing his Checks to Antinomianism, the Baptist minister of that town declared in the pulpit he would go over to Madeley, to this great Arminian, and confound him by argument. He went accordingly to Mr. Fletcher's house, and told him his errand.—Mr. Fletcher did not decline the combat, but only proposed they should first have a little prayer. After prayer the argumentation commenced and proceeded; and Mr. Fletcher not only maintained his ground, but made a considerable impression on his heroic assailant.—What with his matchless piety, his loving and amiable spirit and temper, and the strength and clearness of his arguments, he made a breach in the wall of this Calvinian fortress. The minister returned home full of admiration, and the praises of Mr. Fletcher; and was never afterwards able so to preach as to satisfy his Calvinistic auditors, that he remained orthodox.

The following anecdote I had from the best authority, and knew the surviving branches of the family. One Sunday, after the morning service, Mr. ——, a gentleman farmer, insulted Mr. Fletcher very grossly, as he came out of the church, evincing great enmity against a faithful ministry and genuine piety. Before Mr. Fletcher concluded his sermon in the afternoon, he told the congregation, he had a powerful impression upon his mind, that before the next Sabbath, the Lord would display a signal mark of his displeasure against the enemies of his cause and truth. The week drew almost to a conclusion, and nothing remarkable happened. But.

on the Saturday evening, Mr. —— returning from the market, in a state he should not have been in, fell from his horse, and instantly expired upon the spot. This anecdote was kept back from publication out of tenderness to the family. But it does not appear to me that there is any *sufficient* reason for suppressing for *ever*, such a notable instance of God's displeasure against the opposers of his truth, and of Mr. Fletcher's prophetic spirit.

Since Mr. Fletcher's death, that most excellent woman his widow, has been astonishingly useful in carrying on the good work so happily begun in his days. I formed a very high idea of her piety. Her religion is human nature cured and elevated. She has strong sense, and an easy, natural, and almost irresistible method of drawing up the minds of all about her to heaven and heavenly things. She has for many years been the great counsellor and director of the parish of Madeley; and that frequently as well in temporals as in spirituals. In short ever since Mr. Fletcher's death, she has been little less than the vicar of the parish.—She has never quitted the vicarage house, though she pays a low annual rent for it; and the vicar will, I believe, employ or dismiss any curate at her request.

The Rev. Mr. Grimshaw,

Is a name well know to the religious world. This eminently good and useful man, was a clergyman of the Church of England. He was born at Brindle, near Preston, in Lancashire, in September, 1708; was ordained in 1731, but for some time afterwards was vain and trifling, the reverse of all serious godliness. At this time he was minister of Todmorden, nine miles north of Rochdale. However, in two or three years he became more thoughtful; and in 1742, he became a genuine Christian, a zealous preacher of the gospel.

In May, that same year, he became minister of Haworth, in the parish of Bradford, in Yorkshire. Haworth is one of those obscure places, which like those fishing towns on the coast of the Sea of Galilee, where our Saviour bestowed so much of his time and labours;

owes most of its celebrity to the preaching of the gospel. Its name would scarcely have been known, had it not been connected with the name of the celebrated Grimshaw. The bleak and barren state of the adjacent country, was no improper emblem of the state of the inhabitants, who, when he went first among them, were in general very ignorant, careless, and wicked, having little more sense of religion than their cattle, and were wild and uncultivated like the rocks and hills which surrounded them. But by the blessing of God upon his zealous and abundant labours, very many were awakened out of their sinful sleep, were brought to fear God, to live godly, righteous, and sober lives, and were filled with peace and joy in believing. His lively, striking, and impressive method of preaching, was soon much talked of, and attracted great numbers to hear him from every part of the surrounding country, and often from a great distance. Nor was this merely during the period of novelty but continued through more than twenty successive years.

As the poor make their want of better clothes an excuse for not coming to divine service in the day-time, he established, chiefly for their sakes, a sermon on Sunday evenings, after preaching forenoon and afternoon. And he began a method in 1743, which he continued to the end of his life, of preaching in each of the four hamlets under his care, three times every month. By this, the old and the infirm, who could not attend the church, had the truth of God brought to their houses; and many who were so careless as scarce ever to go to the church, were thus allured to hear.

It was not long, before the holiness of his life, the zeal and diligence with which he instructed the people of his charge, and the great good which many from the neighbouring parishes had obtained by attending his ministry, caused him to have many invitations to preach at the houses of divers persons in other parishes. And when these petitioners, like the man of Macedonia, cried, "Come over and help us," he believed it to be his duty to go. And thus, while he provided abundantly for his own flock, he annually preached near three hundred times to congregations in other parts. He formed two

circuits for himself, which, with some occasional variations, he traced every week alternately. One of these, he pleasantly termed his *idle week;* because during *that* he seldom preached more than twelve or fourteen times. In his *working week*, he often preached twenty-four and sometimes thirty times. An itinerant clergyman was a strange thing: and Mr. Grimshaw was perhaps the first minister in Yorkshire, whose zeal prompted him to preach in other parishes, without obtaining consent from the ministers belonging to them.

From the year 1745, he maintained a close union with the Methodists, and acted as Mr. Wesley's assistant in some parts of Yorkshire and Lancashire. The parts then formed what was called the *Haworth Circuit*, of which Mr. Grimshaw was considered as being the perpetual superintendent. He visited the classes quarterly, and renewed their tickets; attended quarterly meetings, and frequently preached upon those occasions; and often presided at love-feasts in the Methodist societies. He attended the conference, when held at Leeds, and always preached. At that time, the conference was held at London, Bristol, and Leeds, alternately, and at no other place. His employments would not allow him time to go to either of the other places: but though he was never there, he had a great name, and many friends in London. He lived in strict friendship with the Methodist preachers; they lodged at his house, and preached in his kitchen; and he regularly published in his church when the preaching would be in his house. And he was so far from envying the talents, popularity, or success of the preachers, that he greatly rejoiced in their labours. He heard even the weakest of them with great and humble attention, and many of them he preferred in honour to himself. One time, after William Shent had been preaching in his kitchen, he fell down before him, saying, "I am not worthy to stand in your presence."—And at another time, when Benjamin Beanland had been preaching in the same place, he embraced him, and said, "The Lord bless thee, *Ben*, this is worth a hundred of my sermons."

Mr. Grimshaw's was a very extensive circuit, and though they travelled much on horseback, it required

three or four preachers, besides him, to supply it.—But he regularly supplied his own church on the Sundays. His house and church were ever open to Mr. Whitefield, or any other gospel minister, who might occasionally visit those parts; but in respect to discipline, and doctrines in general, he held the same sentiments as Mr. Wesley.

The Lord gave great success to his labours. It is true, his manner of life excited much envy, jealousy, and displeasure in many of his clerical brethren; but none of these things moved him, nor did he count his character, or even his life, dear unto himself; but went on, testifying the gospel of the grace of God. Nor did he meet with any serious and determined marks of disapprobation from his *superiors* in the church. But he was opposed by some who hated to be reformed.—At Colne, a riotous mob, hired for the purpose, and headed by the parson, disturbed him while preaching.

Mr. White's proclamation for enlisting men into the mob, raised against the Methodist, ran as follows:

"Notice is hereby given, That if any man be mindful to enlist into his Majesty's service, under the command of the Reverend Mr. George White, Commander in Chief, and John Bannister, Lieutenant General of his Majesty's forces, for the defence of the Church of England, and the support of the manufactory in and about Colne, both which are now in danger, let him repair to the drum-head, at the Cross, where each man shall have a pint of ale for advance, and other proper encouragements.

This Mr. White was educated at Doway, in France, for orders in the Church of Rome; but upon his recantation, was noticed by Archbishop Potter, and by him recommended to the Vicar of Whalley, who appointed him minister of Colne. He was not devoid of either parts or literature, but childishly ignorant of common life, and shamefully inattentive to his duty, which he frequently abandoned for weeks together to such accidental assistance as the parish could procure. On one occasion he is said to have read the funeral service more than twenty times in a single night, over the dead bodies which had been interred in his absence. With

these glaring imperfections in his own character, he sought to distinguish himself by a riotous opposition to the Methodists. But, in his last illness, it is said he sent for Mr. Grimshaw to get the assistance of his instructions and prayers, being now fully convinced of the impropriety of his former conduct.

This minister also preached and published a sermon against Mr. Grimshaw and the Methodists, which gave occasion to the only publication Mr. Grimshaw ever favoured the world with. It was printed in 1749, and entitled, "An Answer to a Sermon published against the Methodists, by the Rev. Mr. George White, M. A. Minister of Colne and Marsden, in Lancashire. By the Rev. William Grimshaw, Minister of Haworth, Yorkshire."

Mr. Miles has done a real service to the world by republishing this pamphlet, in connexion with his valuable life of Mr. Grimshaw. The pamphlet consists of eighty pages, twelves, and is a very good defence of Methodism, particularly as circumstances then stood. But it has nearly been lost to the world; for it was with difficulty, after a considerable search, that a copy of it was procured.

When Mr. Wesley or Mr. Whitefield visited Haworth, the custom was, after the prayers had been read in the church, to go through a window upon a scaffold erected for the purpose in the church-yard, and after preaching to congregations consisting of thousands, they returned into the church, and administered the Lord's Supper to great numbers. This often took up a good while; and in the meantime, a preacher continued preaching out of doors. These were times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and many drew water with joy out of the wells of salvation.

It was a constant custom of Mr. Grimshaw, to attend the feasts and wakes, kept in the neighbouring villages, accompanied by two or three local preachers, whom he invited to assist him. And after these men had preached, one after another, he concluded the service by preaching himself. This plan produced the most happy effects; many were hereby kept from following the multitude to do evil, and from contracting

debts, or wounding their consciences, while others got real and lasting good to their immortal souls.

At Haworth there are two feasts every year. It had been customary with the inn-keepers, and some other inhabitants, to make a subscription for horse-races at the latter feast. These were of the lowest description, and frequented by the lowest of the people. They exhibited a scene of vulgar rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, wild uproar and confusion. Mr. Grimshaw had frequently attempted, but in vain, to put a stop to this mischievous custom. His remonstrances were but little regarded, and probably any other man would have been abused, in making the attempt to stop an established practice, so agreeable to the taste of vulgar depravity. They so revered his character, as to hear his expostulation with a measure of patience, but still persisted in what so much grieved him. But he gave himself unto prayer for some time before the feast, entreating God to put a stop to this evil. When the race time came the people assembled as usual, but were soon dispersed. Even before the race could begin, dark clouds covered the sky, which soon poured forth such excessive rains, that the people could not remain upon the ground; and it continued to rain excessively during the three days appointed for the races. This event, though it took place many years since, is still remembered and spoken of at Haworth. It is a common saying among the people, that "Old Grimshaw put a stop to the races by his prayers." It proved an effectual stop: for there have been no races in that neighbourhood from that time to this day.

What was brought him for dues, he took without being rigorous. He used to tell the people, "I will not deserve your curses when I am dead, for what I have received for my poor labours among you. I want no more of you, than your souls for my God, and a bare maintenance for myself."

His whole life proved this declaration to be true. He required nothing but the plainest food and raiment; and he would frequently say, that these were more than he deserved. He hated wastefulness, and was strictly frugal: and would sometimes say, "How can those

persons answer before God, for the food which they deny to poor Christians, and throw away upon their dogs !"

It was his frequent and almost constant custom to go out of the church while the psalm before the sermon was singing, to see if he could find any idling in the churchyard, the street, or in the public houses. And many of those whom he found he would drive into the church before him. A person passing by a public-house one Sunday forenoon, was surprised to see several persons making their escape, some jumping out at the lower windows and others over a wall. He was alarmed, thinking a fire had broke out in the house; but upon inquiring, found all this commotion was caused by the discovery that the *Parson* was coming. They were as much afraid of him as of a justice of the peace.

He endeavoured to suppress that custom, so prevalent in country places, of walking in the fields on the Lord's day, between the services and in the evening. He spoke against it in the pulpit; and visited the usual haunts in order to detect and reprove those who were guilty. At some distance from Haworth there was a place to which many young people frequently resorted. One evening he disguised himself, so that they did not know *him* till he was so near them as to know who *they* were; he then spoke, charging them not to move. He took down all their names with his pencil, and ordered them to attend him at his house, on a day, and at an hour which he named. And they all went as punctually as if they had been served with a judge's warrant. He led them into a private room, formed them into a circle, commanded them to kneel down, he kneeled down in the midst of them, and prayed for them very earnestly, and at some length. He closed the interview by an affecting lecture. This discipline never needed to be repeated; for it is said the place has never been resorted to on a Sunday evening from that time to this.

When at home, he had a meeting for prayer and exhortation every morning, in the summer at five, and in the winter at six o'clock. These meetings were early and short, that the people might not be kept from

the duties of their calling, whether in the field or in the house. He thought that to begin the day with religious exercises, would sweeten labour, prepare for trials, and fortify against temptations. His own diligence was very great. The exertions of the most industrious man in trade, could not exceed his in endeavouring to do good to men, and bring glory to his Maker. In every action of common life, and in his most common and familiar conversation, a savour of piety was still to be discovered. And his mind was prompt and fertile, in improving the little incidents of daily occurrence, to convey and impress spiritual and profitable lessons.—Herein he resembled our Saviour, who instructed his disciples and his other hearers, by observations on birds and flowers, to which he pointed them. In the pulpit he depicted sin in such strong and frightful colours, as to make sinners tremble.

His constitution was vigorous, his health good, his spirits lively, and his zeal truly fervent. He was rather low in stature; broad-set and strong; and a good deal marked by the small pox. He could endure much labour and fatigue; and he often showed less mercy to his body, than a merciful man would do to his beast, traversing the bleak neighbouring mountains in all weathers. Thus did the love of Christ constrain him to spend and be spent in the best and most important of all employments.

The fear of the Lord raised Mr. Grimshaw above that fear of man which bringeth a snare. He exhorted and rebuked with all authority, as well as with long-suffering and gentleness. He was bold and faithful in his private reproofs and admonitions as well as in his public ministrations. And he had not only an easy method of doing this, but sometimes a very peculiar one.

A man, whose benevolence he had some suspicion of, he made application to, near bed-time, disguised so as to be taken for a poor man, and solicited the favour of a lodging for the night. He hereby proved the man to be what he suspected. Instead of granting the supposed poor man his petition, he loaded him with abuse.

In his discourses, he generally made use of very plain

language, and sometimes language that was homely and familiar. I will give a few specimens.

Upon one occasion he exhorted the people to be thankful for the many mercies they had received at the hand of the Lord, saying, "Some of you can sit down to your table, and eat and drink, and never once think of God, so as either to ask a blessing upon your food, or to return thanks. You are worse than the very swine; for the pigs will *grunt* over their victuals; but you will say nothing." And when he was praying, after thus speaking to the congregation, he said, "Lord, dismiss us with thy blessing: take all these people under thy care, bring them in safety to their own houses, and give them their suppers when they get home; but let them not eat a morsel till they have said grace: then let them eat and be satisfied, and return thanks to thee when they have done. Let them then kneel down and say their prayers before they go to bed: let them do this for once, at any rate, and then thou wilt preserve them till the morning." Once when preaching from the 48th Psalm, verse the 14th, and telling his hearers, among other things, how the Lord would bless them who had him for their God, he said, "They who have this God for theirs, shall never want a pound of butter, or a pint of blue milk, so long as they live."

In giving some advice to Mr. Paul Greenwood, and Mr. Thomas Mitchell, two young preachers, he said,—If you are sent of God to preach the gospel, all hell will be up in arms against you. Prepare for the battle, and stand fast in the good ways of God. You must not expect to gain much of this world's goods by preaching the gospel. What you get must come through the devil's teeth; and he will hold it as fast as he can. I count every covetous man to be one of the devil's teeth; and he will let nothing go for God and his cause, but what is forced from him." As he was favoured with a liberal education, at the grammar-schools of Blackburn and Heskin, and afterwards at Christ's College, in Cambridge, it could not be from want of learning that he used occasionally this plain, familiar style, or as it is sometimes termed, *market language*. He knew the ignorance of the people, and studied to speak to them as they would best understand his meaning.

Unwearied laboriousness; deep, yet cheerful piety; a plain, familiar style, which he made use of in order to be better understood by an auditory, in general unlearned and ignorant; accompanied by almost unequalled usefulness; form the chief features of his character.

As a polemic writer, Mr. Fletcher was superior to Mr. Grimshaw. But in *extensive* and *abundant* usefulness, as a preacher, Mr. Grimshaw was greatly superior to Mr. Fletcher. And yet, Mr. Fletcher was not only an able, but a very useful preacher; and God crowned his labours with great success.

In a spiritual, as well as natural sense, there are soils comparatively barren as well as fruitful. And I think it but just to observe, that Mr. Grimshaw laboured in the more fruitful, and Mr. Fletcher in the more barren field.

He was a lover of hospitality, and in the summer season had many visitants. Sometimes the house was full. He would give beds to as many as he could, and then, unknown to his guests, would sleep in the hay-loft himself. Early one morning, one of these occasional lodgers, was not a little surprized to find Mr. Grimshaw cleaning the boots of his friends, whom he supposed were still asleep.

He was a lover of mankind, and a follower of him whose tender mercies are over all his works, and who is good to the thankful, and to the unthankful. He tenderly sympathized with the poor and afflicted.

He never sought either patronage or preferment. He was of a catholic and candid spirit. If good was done, he cared not who might be the instrument. His bowels yearned over careless sinners. He beheld them, yea, even the most profligate, with grief and compassion. He embraced every favorable opportunity of speaking a useful and seasonable word to any person he might fall in with on the road. And in some, the good seed, though sown on the highway, took root and brought forth good fruit.

It was his custom to go from house to house, warning, teaching, and exhorting the people respecting their soul's salvation. He was very punctual in fulfilling his

appointments. He was sure to be at the place where he was expected; and exactly at the time.

His usual hour of rising was at four o'clock in summer, and five in winter. In his family in the morning, before prayer, he read the psalms and lessons appointed for the day. In summer he went to bed about ten o'clock, and in winter about eleven.

Few men ever thought or spoke more meanly of themselves than he did. Nor could he bear to hear others speak well of him. He was a hearty friend to the established church, and firmly attached to the constitution and government of his country. He feared God, and honoured the king.

Not knowing who might be his successor at Haworth church, and anxious that the gospel he preached might still be preached there, in 1758 he built a chapel at his own expense. The cause of religion sunk very low some years after he died. But the chapel is now galleried and well attended, and we have a good society and congregation there.

In the spring of 1763, Haworth was visited by a malignant putrid fever, of which many persons died. Before he was taken ill, he had a pre-sentiment that one of his family would fall a victim to the prevailing affliction. In visiting the sick he caught the infection: and from the first attack of the fever, expected and welcomed the approach of death. He was greatly supported in his affliction, and his consolations abounded. When Mr. Venn asked about the state of his mind, he cheerfully replied, "As happy as I can be on earth, and as sure of glory as if I was in it." At another time he said to his housekeeper, "O Mary! I have suffered the last night what the blessed martyrs did; my flesh has been as it were roasting before a hot fire. But I have nothing to do but to step out of my bed into heaven, and I have one foot upon the threshold already." His old friend, Mr. Jeremiah Robertshaw, an itinerant preacher, calling to see him in his illness, Mr. Grimshaw took hold of his hand at parting and said, "The Lord bless you, Jerry: I will pray for you as long as I live; and if there be such a thing as praying in heaven, I will pray for you there also." "Mark the perfect man, and

behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace. Doubtless the reader will add, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Amen.

He gave up the ghost, April the 7th, 1763, in the 55th year of his age, and in the 21st from his settlement at Haworth. He was buried in the church at Luddenden, near Halifax. The funeral was plain; yet attended with circumstances that made it more solemn and affecting than, perhaps, the pompous funeral of Lord Nelson. Almost the whole neighbourhood followed his corpse, for six or seven miles, making the air resound with sighs and groans, and bedewing the road with their tears. Mr. Venn, then vicar of Huddersfield, preached a funeral sermon for him at Luddenden and Haworth, and Mr. Romaine preached another at St. Dunstan's in the West in London.

Mr. Grimshaw was twice happily married. He was a burning and shining light. He was of a cheerful, generous, lively turn of mind; very courteous, and open as the day in his conversation with the people wherever he went. He was a natural orator; spoke with great facility; and preached the gospel with great ability and approbation. Lastly, he spoke with that authority which belongs to the messengers of God. And with such success did the Lord crown his labours in his own parish, that one year, after having buried eighteen persons, he said he had good reason to believe that sixteen of them were gone to heaven.

Sundry other clergymen at different times, have assisted Mr. Wesley and his preachers, in carrying on the work of God. But the chief part of the ministerial instruments engaged in this work, have been laymen, though several of them have received ordination. Many of these have been very eminent for piety and usefulness, and some of them for preaching abilities. I shall give a short account of a few, as a specimen of the whole body.

Mr. Wesley had not the most distant idea of being assisted by lay-preachers when he began to form societies. And when the first of them began to preach, he was exceedingly averse to it. Thomas Maxfield was the first lay-preacher, and began about the year 1740

Mr. Wesley being out of London on some important business, had appointed Mr. Maxfield to pray with the people during his absence, and to give them such advice, as might appear to him needful. But he did not expect he would attempt to preach; nor does it appear that Mr. Maxfield had any such intention; but being fervent in spirit and mighty in the scriptures, he was led on further than he intended, and began to *preach*. However, this supposed usurpation of the sacred office offended some of the society, and Mr. Wesley hastened to London to stop the evil. When he arrived he manifested great dissatisfaction at the innovation. But his mother, who was not only a woman of piety, but of great understanding, and more especially in the things of God, said to him, "John, you know what my sentiments have been; you cannot suspect me of favouring any thing of this kind; but take care what you do with respect to that young man; for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are." This restrained Mr. Wesley from executing the resolution he had formed; and finding that good was done, he reluctantly permitted the practice to continue.

THOMAS MAXFIELD

Was a man of piety, and his ministerial labours were remarkably owned of God. Lady Huntington heard him expound the scriptures, and said to Mr. Wesley in a letter, "I never mentioned to you that I had seen Maxfield: he is one of the greatest instances of God's peculiar favour that I know; he is raised from the stones to sit among the princes of his people. He is my astonishment. The first time I heard him expound, expecting little from him, I sat over against him, and thought, what a power of God must be with him to make *me* give any attention to him. But before he had gone over one fifth part, any one that had seen me, would have thought I had been made of wood or stone, so quite immoveable I both felt and looked. His power in prayer is quite extraordinary.—I could either talk or write for an hour about him."

After preaching for some years, Mr. Maxfield was or-

dained by an Irish bishop. It is said the bishop ordained him out of compassion to Mr. Wesley, that he might not work himself to death. Mr. Maxfield was very useful, and was in high esteem, both with Mr. Wesley and the people. But in the year 1762, George Bell, and some others, gave way to enthusiastical flights and irregularities, which were disgraceful to religion; and very unhappily, Mr. Maxfield was induced to take part with them. Mr. Wesley had acted with great caution and tenderness towards these well meaning, but mistaken people. But at last, he saw the necessity of adopting firm and decisive measures. The result was, that Mr. Maxfield left Mr. Wesley, and took away about two hundred of the London society. Divers of these were among Mr. Wesley's most esteemed friends, and it has been thought that this was the heaviest trial which he ever had.

Mr. Maxfield got a commodious chapel near Moorfields. He preached there for many years; was much respected, and very useful. For several years before his death, he was very friendly with the Methodists, and our preachers frequently preached in his Chapel.—A paralytic stroke put a speedy end to his life; but it is believed that he exchanged a world of trial for a world of rest and felicity.

John Nelson,

Very properly ranks among the first Methodist preachers. He was a native of Birstal, near Leeds, and was born in the year 1707. Very early in life he was under serious concern for the salvation of his soul. In general he acted according to the light he had, and was still wishing, and endeavouring to learn the ways of the Lord more perfectly. His business led him to reside some years in London. Here he went about seeking rest and finding none. He went from one place of worship to another, and at last, he had an opportunity of hearing Mr. Whitefield and Mr. Wesley. His mind gradually expanded, till he was made wise unto salvation. In the memoirs of his life, written by himself, he gives an account of his hearing Mr. Wesley the first

time, which was out of doors, in Moorfields, He says, "As soon as he got upon his stand, he stroked back his hair, and turned his face towards where I stood, and I thought fixed his eyes upon me. His countenance struck such an awful dread upon me, before I heard him speak, that it made my heart beat like the pendulum of a clock; and when he did speak, I thought his whole discourse was aimed at me." Soon after this, Mr. Nelson was made a partaker of that peace of God that passeth all understanding. Among many oppositions and difficulties, he continued to cleave to the Lord, and to walk in his fear, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.

But after some time, it was impressed upon his mind that he must return to his native place. I shall insert his own account of this affair. He says. "About ten days before Christmas, I went to St. Paul's, and while I was at the communion-table I felt such an awful sense of God resting upon me, that my heart was like melting wax before him, and all my prayer was, 'Thy will be done; thy will be done.' I was so dissolved into tears of love, that I could scarce take the bread; and after I had received it, it was impressed upon my mind, I must go into Yorkshire directly." Accordingly, believing it to be the will of God, he packed up his clothes, and set out; he found much of the Lord's presence on the road; but had no more thoughts of preaching than of eating fire.

Mr. Ingham had preached in the neighbourhood of Birstal, being then connected with the Moravians, and the doctrine of the new birth had caused much talk in those parts. John Nelson's acquaintance asked him what he thought of this doctrine. He told them that this *new faith*, as they termed it, was the old faith of the gospel; and he related to them his own experience. This was soon noised abroad, and more and more came to inquire concerning these strange things: some put him upon proving these great truths; and thus he was brought unawares, to quote, explain, compare, and enforce several parts of the scriptures. This he did at first sitting in his house, till the company increased so, that the house could not contain them. He then stood at the door, which he was commonly obliged to do eve-

ry evening as soon as he came from work. And this may give the reader an idea of the way and manner in which many of the Methodist preachers have been called to the work of preaching the gospel. For some time, Mr. Nelson's friends, and his nearest relatives, opposed him, and were ashamed of him; but he was steadfast and immovable, and abounded in the work of the Lord. His success was very great in and about Birstal. Sinners were daily converted. Almost every night he went out of town, often four or five miles, after he had done his work, which was that of a mason; and commonly returned the same night in all sorts of weather.

In a while, Mr. John Wesley paid him a visit on his way to Newcastle. He said to Mr. Wesley, "Sir, you may make use of Jacob's words, "The children thou hast begotten in Egypt before are mine; for I freely deliver them to your care."

It was about May when Mr. John Wesley came into Yorkshire; and towards Michaelmas, Mr. Charles Wesley, and Mr. Graves came: and from the time of their coming into Yorkshire, to their return to the south, which was about a month, some part of which they spent at Newcastle, eighty were added to the societies.

The Christmas following, Mr. Nelson was invited by William Shent to go and preach at Leeds. But the attempt was considered so hazardous, that he and the society about Birstal kept a day of fasting and prayer before he went. As he went over the bridge, he met two men, who said to him, "If you attempt to preach in Leeds, you must not expect to come out again alive; for there is a company of men that swear they will kill you." He answered, "they must first ask my Father's leave; for if he has any work more for me to do, all the men in the town cannot kill me till I have done it." He preached to a large congregation, which behaved well, and received the word with meekness.

After this he made an excursion into Lancashire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, and Lincolnshire, preaching with great success, though accompanied with opposition and persecution. Mr. Wesley sent for him up to London. But by this time he had nearly worn out his

clothes, and did not know where the next should come from. His wife said, he was not fit to go any where as he was. He answered, "I have worn them out in the Lord's work, and he will not let me want long." And two days after, a neighbouring tradesman, that did not belong to the society, came to his house, and brought him a piece of blue cloth for a coat, and a piece of black cloth for a waistcoat and breeches. When he had got ready, he set out for London on foot, but one of his neighbours was going on horseback, who took his pace, and sometimes let him ride. He preached at Nottingham-cross, in the way. After spending a little time in London, he set out for Oxford, and after preaching there, and at several other places, he reached Bath, and then Bristol. After a short stay there, he set out for Cornwall. One day, after travelling twenty miles, without baiting, he and Mr. Downs, who travelled with him, came to a village, and inquired for an inn. But they were told there was none in the place, nor any on the road within twelve Cornish miles. Mr. Nelson said, "Come, brother Downs, we must live by faith." But they ventured to go to a house, and ask for something. The woman of the house said, "We have bread, butter, and milk, and good hay for your horse;" for they had one horse between them. When they reached St. Ives, Mr. Nelson worked at his business for several days. After this he went and preached at St. Just, the Land's-End, and sundry other places. On his return from Cornwall he was benighted on the Twelve-mile-common, and was wet to the skin; but by the providence of God, he came to the house where he had called in going down. He knocked at the door, and the woman knew his voice, and said, "The Lord bless you! come in." They pulled off his wet clothes, put on dry ones, got him something warm for supper, and took his wet clothes out of his bags, which they rinsed, dried, and ironed. He sang a hymn, prayed, and gave them an exhortation that night. The next morning the man of the house alarmed that and another village, so that by seven o'clock, he had about three hundred to preach to, who all seemed to receive the word with joy.

He was soon after informed, that the man and his wife, who received him, had received the Lord that sent him.

After preaching at many places in the way, he got home, and found his wife much better than she had been, though never likely to recover her former strength, owing to a persecution she met with at Wakefield, when Mr. Larwood was mobbed there. After they had abused him, she with some other women, set out for Birstal, a mob followed them into the fields; when they overtook them, she turned about and spake to them, upon which all the men returned without touching them; but the women followed them till they came to a gate, where they stopped them: they damned her, saying, "You are Nelson's wife, and here you shall die."—They saw she was big with child, yet beat her on the body so cruelly, that they killed the child, and she went home and miscarried immediately.

Having occasionally wrought at his business, and sometimes travelled into different parts to preach the gospel, after preaching at Adwalton, a few miles from Leeds, Joseph Gibson, the constable's deputy, an alehouse-keeper, who found his craft was in danger, pressed him for a soldier. Mr. Nelson asked him by whose order this was done. He said, "Several of the inhabitants of the town, who did not like so much preaching." And by his talk it appeared they were they of his own craft, and the clergyman, who had agreed together. They took him to a public house. Mr. Charlesworth offered 500*l* bail for him till the next day. But no bail would be taken. He was removed the next day to Halifax. When he was brought before the commissioners, they smiled one at another, as soon as they saw him. They told the door-keepers not to let any man come in; but Mr. Thomas Brooks had got in with him: and they said, "That is one of his converts." They asked the constable's deputy what he had against him? he answered, "I have nothing to say against him, but that he preaches to the people; and some of our townsmen don't like so much preaching." They broke out in laughter, and one of them swore he was fit to go for a soldier, for there he might have preaching enough.—Mr. Nelson said, "Sir, you ought not to swear, "Well,"

said the commissioners, "you have no license to preach, and you shall go for a soldier. He answered, "I have as much right to preach as you have to swear." One said to the captain, "Captain, is he fit for you?" He answered, yes: "Then take him away." They refused to hear several of his neighbours, who were ready to speak to his character. The minister of Birstal, who was one of the commissioners, displayed very great enmity against him, and did all he could to injure him and his friends in the esteem of the other commissioners. The papers sent on his behalf were not suffered to be put on the file, lest if they should be called for, they should make against them.

From Halifax he was conducted to Bradforth, and was put into the dungeon, which was a loathsome, stinking place. One of the soldiers offered the captain, that if he would give him charge over Mr. Nelson, that he would answer with his life, that he should be forth-coming in the morning. Mr. Nelson offered to pay a guard to be set over him in a room. But the captain answered, "My order is to put you in the dungeon." In the morning, about four o'clock, his wife, and several friends, came to the dungeon, and spoke to him through the hole of the door. His wife said, "Fear not: the cause is God's for which you are here, and he will plead it himself. Therefore be not concerned about me and the children: for he that feeds the young ravens will be mindful of us. He will give you strength for your day; and after we have suffered a while, he will perfect that which is lacking in our souls, and then bring us where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest."

The next day he was guarded to Leeds; and just as the service began at the church, he was guarded to the jail. Several offered to give bail for him, and even a stranger offered an hundred pounds. But the offer was refused. But a friend sent him a bed to lie on.

The next day, he and some other pressed men, were marched to York. He was taken before several officers, who seemed to rejoice as men that had taken great spoil, and saluted him with many grievous oaths. He asked these officers, "Do you believe there is a God, and that

he is a God of truth?" They said, "We do." He answered, "I cannot believe you, I tell you plainly."—They asked, "Why so?" He replied, "I cannot think that any man of common understanding, who believes that God is true, dare take his name in vain; much less do you believe that God can hear you, when you pray him to damn your souls." They said, "You must not preach here; you must not talk so to us that are officers." He told them, there was but one way to prevent it, and that was to swear no more in his hearing.

As he was guarded through York, the streets and windows were filled with people, who shouted and huzza'd, as if he had been one who had laid waste the nation. But the Lord made his brow like brass, so that he could pass through the city as if there had been none in it but God and himself. But during his stay in York, he had full exercise for his understanding, faith, and patience. However, God gave him friends, and some even among the soldiers. And when he left the city, many of the people said to him, "We are sorry you are going so soon from York; but if you get your liberty, we hope both you and Mr. Wesley will come; for we have need of such plain dealing, and thousands in this city would be glad to hear. We expected some of you two or three years ago: but you had no regard for our souls, till God brought you by force. Surely you were not sold hither, but sent for our good: therefore, forget us not."

From York they were marched northward through Easingwold, Northallerton, Darlington, and Durham to Sunderland. The people crowded to see him in his journey, and he embraced every opportunity of instructing them in the truths of the gospel. God wonderfully supported him in his trials; and Mr. Wesley contrived to see him at Durham. He exhorted him to watch and pray, and told him, he did not doubt but his captivity would turn to the glory of God, and the furtherance of the gospel. "Brother Nelson," said he, "lose no time; speak and spare not, for God has work for you to do in every place where your lot is cast: and when you have fulfilled his good pleasure, he will break your bonds in sunder, and we shall rejoice together." They then

prayed, and commended each other to the grace of God. The day following he was marched to Sunderland. Here he met with sundry comforts and encouragements, and some trials and persecutions. An officer who thought well of him, procured him a furlough to Newcastle for a week: and shortly after, he received a letter from Mr. Charles Wesley, informing him, that the Earl of Sunderland had assured Lady Huntingdon, that he should be set at liberty in a few days. He was discharged accordingly. One of the officers bore testimony, that he had done much good among them: for that they had not one third the cursing and swearing among them which they had before he came.

He returned home to his wife, children, and friends, at Birstal. After some time he went to York; and found that the seed sown in his captivity had sprung up; for nineteen had found peace with God, and twice as many were under convictions, though they had no one to instruct them in his absence, but the little books he had left them.

Soon after, Mr. Wesley sent for him to London, and many came to hear him out of curiosity, when they heard it was the man who had been in prison; and some were convinced of the truth they heard. While he was in London, he received a letter, inviting him to go and preach at Sunderland: two men, who had conversed with him when there, having found the Lord, and said that their souls panted for the salvation of their neighbours. Soon after, therefore, he preached at Sunderland Cross, to the chief part of the inhabitants of the town, who behaved well, and God visited many with his salvation. Sometime after he visited Bristol, and spent four months there, and in some parts of Somerset and Wiltshire. God wrought by his instrumentality: "Though the instrument be ever so weak," said he, "if God command it, a worm shall shake the earth."

It was at this time that the Scotch rebels entered England, but were soon turned back. This occasioned a general joy; but with regard to many, this joy was of the frantic, and licentious sort. Accordingly, when Mr. Nelson left Bristol, he met with many sufferings.

Almost at every place where he came to preach, mobs were raised as if they were determined to kill him, because the rebels were conquered. Even in the neighbourhood of his native place, he met with great abuse. And when he paid another visit to York he was cruelly persecuted, and narrowly escaped being killed by lawless and violent mobs. When preaching on Heworth-moor, (falsely called Hepworth-moor in Nelson's Journal) about a mile north of York, a popish gentleman brought a mob, and cried out, "knock out the brains of that mad dog;" and perfectly gnashed with his teeth. Immediately a shower of stones came and hit many of the people, till not one could stand near him. As he was going away, one struck him with a piece of brick on the back of his head, and he fell flat on his face, and must have lain for some time, had not two men helped him up; but he could not stand. The blood ran down his back quite into his shoes, and the mob followed him through the city, swearing they would kill him when they got him out of it. But a gentleman pulled him into his house, and dispersed the mob. After resting a while, he rode to Acomb, (improperly called Acklam in his Journal,) a town about two miles to the west of York, where he was to have preached at five o'clock. But while he and two of his friends were walking in a field near to where he intended to preach, two stout men came, and one of them swore, "Here he is; I will kill him if there be not another man alive." He pulled off his hat and wig, and gave them to his companion, saying, "If I do not kill him, I will be damned." He then fiercely attacked him, threw him down, leaped with his knees on his belly several times, till he had nearly beaten the breath out of him, and caused his head to bleed again. He then went to the gentlemen, who had hired him and the other man to kill Mr. Nelson, and said, "Gentlemen, I have killed the preacher, he lies dead in the croft." The parson's brother said, "Well, we will see ourselves; we will not take your word," Upon which, he and about twenty more came to Mr. Nelson. But he had recovered his breath, was turned on his face, and lay bleeding upon the ground. They lifted him up, but as soon as he could speak, he

said, "Your mercy is only to make way for more cruelty. Gentleman, if I have done any thing contrary to the law, let me be punished by the law; I am a subject to King George, and I appeal to the law; and I am willing to go before the Lord Mayor, as the King's magistrate." But they cursed him and the king too, saying, he was as bad as him and his fellows, or he would have hanged them all like dogs before that time: and one said, "If he were here, we would serve him as bad as you. The parson's brother cursed Mr. Nelson, and said, "According to your preaching, you would prove our ministers to be blind guides, and false prophets; but we will kill you as fast as you come." When he got into the street, they huzza'd, one gave him a hasty pluck by the right hand, and another struck him on the left side of his head, and knocked him down. This they did eight times. And when at last he was unable to rise again, they took him by the hair of his head, and dragged him upon the stones for near twenty yards, some kicking him on his sides and thighs with their feet as the others dragged him along. Then six of them got upon him, and said they would tread the Holy Ghost out of him. They then told him to order his horse, that they might see him out of the town. But he thought they intended to kill him privately, and so refused to go. Afterwards they attempted to throw him into a draw-well, but were prevented. Some friends got him up, and helped him into the house. Then the mob set out for York, singing obscene songs: and this was on Easter-Sunday. This was about the year 1749. From that time till his death, in 1774, he was steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. He fought the good fight, and kept the faith, till he finished his course rather suddenly at Leeds, and was buried at Birstal, where he was born. His friends put a monumental stone over his remains, to tell where he lies, and to perpetuate his memory. But this has been far better perpetuated by his labours, and the account which he published of the first forty-two years of his life.

He was a man of great bodily strength and vigour; of a good understanding and ready thought; of firm

integrity and genuine piety; mighty in the Scriptures, and apt to teach; and his labours in preaching the gospel were crowned with great success. He was the first Methodist, and the first Methodist preacher in Yorkshire. Since then WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT!

Mr. Christopher Hopper,

was among the first Methodist preachers, and deserves to be had in remembrance. He was born on Christmas-day, 1722, at Ryton, in the Bishopric of Durham.

While he was very young, he was greatly affected by the awful death of his schoolmaster, who drowned himself. He had catechized his scholars twice every week, and made them attend the church on Sundays, and all holy-days appointed for divine worship. One, week, Mr. Hopper thought he was more devout than usual. The following Sabbath he received the Lord's Supper at Ryton church. A few days after a gentleman persuaded him to play a game at cards. This was followed by such distress of mind, that after much inward conflict, he sunk into despair, and committed suicide. This melancholy event was the means of seriously impressing young Hopper's mind with thoughts of death, judgment, hell, and heaven; and he began to discern the difference between the righteous and the wicked. These impressions were increased by a bodily illness, which continued nearly two years. When the doctor pronounced him incurable, he was alarmed, and filled with fear. But he read the Bible, and other books of piety, called upon God, and began to see more into the sinfulness of his heart and life. In a while, he obtained a good hope through grace, and was comforted. He felt himself happy in the love of God, and of all mankind. But after his health was restored, he did not cleave to the Lord, and was again entangled by the world and sin.

After spending some time at school, he inclined to be a musician, and applied himself to that science with great assiduity. He then undertook the management of a waggon, on the rail ways between the coal-mines and the river Tyne. For five years he employed him-

self in this business, and agriculture: and during this period he was a slave to folly and sinful pleasures.—But conscience often reproved him, and he sometimes felt sorrow of heart. He found Satan's service perfect drudgery, and all earthly things vanity and vexation of spirit. Sometimes he reflected on the happiness he had enjoyed in his affliction: but it then appeared to him as a dream. A remarkable and very providential escape from instant death, by the overturning of a waggon, had a good effect upon him. He was thankful, humble, and desirous to be guided into the way of peace. But spiritual guides, of the right sort, were then very scarce. When Mr. Hopper was about twenty years of age, Mr. Wesley, and his brother Charles, visited Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and the neighbourhood; great crowds flocked to hear them; and a large society was soon formed in Newcastle. All mouths were filled with Wesley, and his followers; some for, and many against them.—A considerable bustle about religion was made among all sects and parties, and Mr. Hopper bustled among the rest. At length he became truly serious. He heard for himself, and received with meekness the ingrafted word, which he proved to be the power of God unto salvation. It came to his heart with power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. The veil was removed, and the true light shone upon him. His cry was, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He saw into the plan of salvation through Christ Jesus, and he believed on him to the saving of his soul, and went on his way rejoicing. Soon after, Mr. Wesley formed a little society at Low-Spenn, where Mr. Hopper lived, and made him the leader. He attended four or five meetings every week, where they prayed, sung psalms and hymns, read the scriptures, and exhorted one another to love and good works. God gave them prosperity.—Many of his old companions were awakened, and turned from sin; and his aged mother, a sister, and a brother also, who had been a notorious sinner, but who lived to be an ornament to religion, till he died in a good old age. Mr. Hopper began to preach, and he was soon invited to many places in the neighbourhood. The fire kindled, and the flame spread: many sinners

were turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. But, as might be expected, he met with persecution. Men of all ranks combined their influence to stop this blessed work of God. For a mechanic to stand up to preach the gospel, was deemed intolerable. Mr. Hopper, and the other lay-preachers were opposed, not by scripture and reason, but by lies and slander, rotten eggs, brick-bats, stones, and such like arguments. The common cry was, "Press them for soldiers; send them on board a man of war; send them to prison, or knock out their brains; *for there is no law for them.*" But this was a great mistake, there was law for them; but hardly a magistrate could be found who had principle or courage enough to do them justice. John Nelson, and several others, were pressed about this time; and the persecutors eagerly sought for an opportunity to seize on Mr. Hopper; but he was remarkably protected. *Tribulation and persecution arising because of the word*, induced him to consider more attentively his call to the work, and to count the cost. He wished only for a rational and scriptural evidence; and after a serious and deliberate consideration, he was satisfied, that a dispensation of the gospel was committed to him, and that it was his duty to *preach the word.* For about five years he taught a school, and during this time he preached much, and formed many societies amongst the hills in the north; especially at Hindley-Hill, Allendale, Weardale, Ninthead, and Alstone, and in crossing the Fells, or enormous mountains, he endured much hardship, and was exposed to great dangers. He now became an itinerant preacher, and in 1750, accompanied Mr. Wesley to Ireland, and the year after to Scotland. A great part of the year 1753, he spent in Ireland, principally in Dublin and Cork. In 1755, he buried his first wife. She was an affectionate wife, a faithful friend, and a very agreeable companion. She made his joys and sorrows her own, and they walked in the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

In September, 1756, in company with four other preachers, he embarked once more for Ireland, and spent the winter in Dublin. In the spring he went to Cork

and Limerick. After sustaining reproaches, and various severe trials, he was taken ill of a fever: the doctor thought he would die; Mr. Hopper took his leave of the world, having clear views of paradise, and the world of happy spirits. When apparently on the brink of eternity, he fell into a sweet sleep, and dreamed that he was dead, and that his spirit was with Christ, in unspeakable happiness; but when he awoke, his fever was gone: and from that moment he began to recover. His bodily strength was soon restored, and he went forth again into the vineyard.

In April, 1759, he married his second wife. "God," says he, "made his face to shine upon us, and amply rewarded me for all my days of mourning. He doubly restored to me all temporal and spiritual blessings. This was a day of prosperity; and therefore I thought it a day of danger. I was now favoured with an agreeable, loving companion, a good house, a pleasant situation, and all things to make life easy and comfortable. I must confess I found a desire to settle, but not to leave my Master's work. I began a little business, and had now a fair opportunity to step into the world; but my blessed Lord would not suffer me: he showed me that his good work would bring me far more gain in the end than all the shops in Newcastle." Leaving his business to the care of Mrs. Hopper, he paid another visit to Scotland, and laboured in different places till the following year. From 1763 to 1765, he also spent in Scotland: the two following years in and about Newcastle-upon-Tyne.—During these two years, he laboured under much bodily affliction, and appeared to be nearly worn out: but he could say, "When I am weak, then am I strong."

The next two years, that is, from August, 1768, to August 1770, he spent in the Birstal circuit with great satisfaction and success. The next year he removed to Bradford; and then spent two more years among his friends in the Newcastle circuit. The two years following he laboured in and about Liverpool and Bolton. He paid a short visit to Ireland: and from the conference in 1777, to that in 1779, he laboured in the Bradford circuit; the two years following in the Colne circuit. Not long after this, in consequence of the in-

creasing infirmities of age, he took up his residence at Bolton-le-moors, being now a superannuated preacher. During forty years, he was a travelling preacher; and the whole period of his ministry was about fifty-seven years, being the oldest Methodist preacher upon the list at the time of his decease. He was a man of sound understanding, and extensive information, while his piety was genuine and exemplary. As a preacher, he was a son of thunder. His manner was peculiar to himself, and his energy was frequently very extraordinary. At these times, his discourses would impress his congregation in a most uncommon manner. In person, he was tall and graceful; in manners, plain, but agreeable; and in spirit firm, independent, and courageous. He was without partiality or hypocrisy, and feared the face of no man. In his last illness he displayed great patience, possessed great inward peace, and was favored with frequent and strong consolations. A few days before his death, he said, "I have not a shadow of a doubt: and as for the enemy, I know not what is become of him; I have neither seen him, nor heard of him for a long time: I think he has quitted the field." He retained his confidence in God to the last; and in joyful hope of future glory, fell asleep in Jesus, in the eightieth year of his age.

I shall only add, that though Mr. Hopper had such great talents as a preacher, and had been so long, and so useful in the work, yet he had no disposition to assume dominion over his brethren; and in his whole conduct made it manifest, that he did not wish to *lord it over God's heritage*. His life was unblemished; his labours were abundantly useful; and his death was that of an aged apostle, who could say, "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give unto me."

Mr. Joseph Cownley,

was a native of Leominster, in Herefordshire, and was born June the 26th, 1723. During his childhood, he

had serious impressions upon his mind respecting his soul and eternity. He discovered the wickedness of his heart; but did not understand the plan by which the health of his spirit might be recovered. He availed himself of the conversation of such serious people as he had any acquaintance with; but did not understand the right ways of the Lord, till he heard Mr. Wesley preach several times in Bath, to which city he had accompanied a neighbouring gentleman. Under these discourses, he learnt the knowledge of himself, and the way of salvation. For this salvation he made humble and earnest application to the throne of grace, and soon found the pearl of great price.

In the year 1744, he began to preach a little in and near the place of his nativity. And these his first efforts, were not only approved of, but were crowned with success, being instrumental to the reformation and salvation of some of his neighbours.

In about two years he became an itinerant preacher under the direction of Mr. Wesley. For this great and arduous undertaking he was eminently qualified, and his labours were abundant, both in England and Ireland. He was much esteemed as a preacher; and what is still better, the Lord accompanied the word spoken by him with the powerful influence of his Spirit, so that sinners were converted, and saints edified. But in 1755, he had a severe fever, that so affected his nervous system, that his useful labours were considerably interrupted, and an incurable pain settled in his head: from which he was never entirely free, by day or by night, for between thirty and forty years.

After this affliction, he spent the chief part of his life at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and the places in its vicinity. He possessed a competency, and gave his labours without reward. In these he was diligent, as well as faithful to the end of his days. He was very highly esteemed for his work's sake; and great deference was paid to his judgment in matters relating to religion and religious societies. If he spoke, the matter was generally decided. The depth and soundness of his understanding were well known, as well as the integrity and impartiality of his heart. He thought much; and as he did not talk

much, what he said was the more attended to. Whatever place he favoured with his visits, he met with a hearty welcome, and was received as a messenger of the Lord.

At the conference in 1788, he was prevailed upon to accept of an appointment to the Edinburgh and Glasgow circuit. But life was too far advanced, and his powers were too much debilitated, to leave him fully adequate to the constant labour of those places. However, he exerted the strength he had, and the people highly esteemed and reverenced him.

About Christmas, when he removed from Edinburgh to Glasgow, he requested Mr. Wesley to let him have a young man to assist him in his work in that city: and he did me the honour to mention my name. The request was granted, and I went to him on New-Year's day. Till the July following, I resided in the same apartments with him, and heard him preach, and preached before him several times every week: and I have ever reflected upon that favoured period of my life with pleasure, though there were some circumstances belonging to the government of the society of the most disagreeable nature I ever met with. But we had peace and harmony between ourselves, and our days, weeks, and months succeeded each other in comfort. He was a man of genuine and eminent piety; of a sound, clear, and deep understanding; and of various information.—He possessed genuine Christian gravity, and yet was easy, familiar, pleasant, and sometimes a little facetious in conversation. His manners were plain and simple, yet very agreeable. He was very seldom, if ever, out of temper himself, and very seldom contributed to ruffle the temper of any other person. He gave attendance to reading and meditation: he was seldom without a book in his hand. His sermons were well digested and arranged; generally short, and yet containing much matter; he appeared to possess endless variety, and yet always dwelt upon matters of essential importance. In the pulpit he was never threadbare, nor ever took up his time, and that of the people, with things of inferior importance, for the purpose of increasing his variety.—He constantly wrote short sketches of his sermons;

and in his latter days, he put the divisions and subdivisions upon a small slip of paper, and laid it upon the bible in the pulpit while he preached, in order that if his memory failed him, he might relieve himself by casting his eye upon his paper. This is a practice I do not recommend; but he was an old man, with a decayed memory, and who had to preach constantly to the same congregation. In general, he preached twice every week in our chapel, called the Orphan-house, in Newcastle, and that for between thirty and forty years.—And after delivering thousands of discourses in the same pulpit, it was a general remark, "Mr. Cownley has always something new." In most particulars, he was a perfect model for a preacher. Plainness, perspicuity, rational and scriptural argument, were visible in all his sermons. Gaudy oratory, and noisy declamation, he despised, and uniformly avoided. His aim was not to be a popular, but a scriptural and useful preacher. And yet he had popularity, and that of the best sort, in a high degree. He was an excellent husband, an affectionate father, and an invaluable friend. He was a man of peace, who studied to give no offence to Jew or Gentile, or the church of God. He was harmless and undefiled, a child of God without rebuke, amidst a crooked and perverse generation. He was *an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile.*

In the former part of the year 1792, he evidently appeared to be fast ripening for a better country. The concerns of eternity seemed to absorb his whole soul. When engaged in prayer with his family, and at the houses of his friends, he was melted into tears, while he enjoyed the closest union with God. During a ministerial visit to the country, in September, he got cold, which brought on a complaint in his stomach, with which he had been frequently afflicted. His last text was, Psa. cv. 3, "Let the heart of them rejoice who seek the Lord." And with this discourse, Sunday, September 23, 1792, he closed the labours of near half a century.

On his return home, the best medical assistance was procured, but in vain. "My heavenly Father," said he, "is my best physician: he is my only physician." A friend said, "The blood of the Redeemer is precious

in our dying moments:" He answered, "O precious! O precious! what should I do but for that?" Seeing him in extreme pain, the doctor said, "Do not be afraid." Mr. Cownley replied, "The fear of death, Sir, has long since been removed; I am not afraid to die, but I am afraid lest I shall become impatient under this affliction." When the physician withdrew, while the sweat fell in large drops from his face, he fervently exclaimed, "Jesus, I am thine. Thou art my only physician. But if it is thy will, and I have finished the work thou hast committed to me, then take me to thyself."

Afterwards he said, "Lord, how little have I done for thee." The last sabbath before his death, the consolations of God were so sweet to him, that his cup of joy ran over. "I feel," said he, such love in my heart, that if I were carried to the chapel, I could sit and preach to the people. But his work was done, and angels were ready to carry his spirit to the regions of rest and happiness.

In October, when at Cork, in Ireland, I received a letter from my esteemed friend, Mr. Gaulter, informing me of his death. In the evening of the 8th of October, he sat down to supper; his daughter Mary had withdrawn into an adjoining room. She shortly heard a noise and returned: but he was speechless.

"Death broke at once the mortal chain,
And forc'd his soul the nearest way."

Reclining his head on the chair, without a struggle or a groan, he resigned his soul to God.

In a selection of characters, intended as a specimen of the whole body of preachers, it would be criminal to omit

Mr. Thomas Hanby.

He was born at Carlisle, December 16, 1733, and was brought up at Barnard-Castle. Both his parents died while he was very young. His relations put him to school for some years, and then to a trade. His first serious impressions were made when about six years of age. Looking up to heaven, he was struck with won-

der, and exclaimed, *God Almighty!* But he was seized with horror, ran home, and shut the door. Some years after he was greatly alarmed by hearing his sister talk about the day of judgment, which he had not heard mentioned before. But these impressions wore off, and he began to be

"Rough in his manners, and untam'd his mind."

When he was about thirteen years old, hearing the bishop was coming to confirm the children in the town where he lived, he thought some preparation was necessary. He applied to a relation, who taught him some prayers, and the church catechism, which he had forgotten, though he had been taught it at school. The sabbath came when the bishop was to confirm: and he having gone through his examination with the minister, had episcopal hands laid upon him. This was in the forenoon; and towards evening he went with some of his companions into the fields, and played at their usual games. But before he went to bed, he was struck with horror, and thought he heard a voice say, "Thy confirmation is made void, for thou hast broken the sabbath." He knew not what to do, but thought he would try to make himself good, by reading and repeating many prayers. He continued in this state, till a poor shoemaker from Leeds, who was a Methodist, having received the truth himself, was willing to impart it to others: not, indeed, by preaching, but by friendly discourse with his former acquaintances; for he was a native of Barnard-Castle. A few were enlightened, and began to meet together. Mr. Hanby was at first inclined to mock them, but was convinced that those despised persecuted people, were able to show him the way of salvation. He begged he might be permitted to meet with them, and his request was granted. And from that time he embraced every opportunity of meeting with them. However, after some time, his relation beforementioned, under the influence and direction of the minister of the parish, prevailed on Mr. Hanby to leave the Methodists. They formed a church society, which was soon larger than that of the Methodists. This society consisted of formal professors, who could play at

cards, and conform to the world in almost every thing. However, as might be expected, this society dwindled away till only Mr. Hanby and his cousin remained of it. They both returned, and solicited re-admission among the Methodists. His cousin obtained the peace of God, and walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, till he died. Mr. Hanby was instant in prayer, till his weary heavy-laden spirit received remission of sins, and was filled with peace and joy in believing.

When he was about eighteen years of age, he spent a few months in Newcastle, and by constantly attending the preaching, night and morning, he was much profited and established. This induced him to visit Leeds, in hope of obtaining similar advantages, in which he was not disappointed. Meantime, his delight was in the law of the Lord, and in his law did he meditate day and night.

About this time, a sudden impression was made upon his mind that he must preach the gospel. But he thought it to be only a temptation; and was the more reluctant to entertain the idea, from what he had seen the preachers suffer from violent persecuting mobs at Barnard Castle. For some time his mind was painfully exercised upon the subject. He was informed of a poor woman, a member of the society, who was dying, and who was said to be wonderfully happy. He desired a friend to take him to see her, and as they went, he prayed to the Lord to remove the load of painful exercise from his mind, and that if it was his will that he should preach, he would show it to the dying saint he was going to visit. "Lord," said he, "thou canst as easily do this, as enable her to triumph over death. If thou wilt show me a token, by which I may know thy will, then will I preach thy word wherever thou shalt please to send me." When he reached the house, as he was an entire stranger to the woman, and all the family, he stood at a distance. After some time he went out, and when he returned, was informed the dying woman had made much inquiry about the young man who had stood in the corner. He went to the side of her bed, and she looked him earnestly in the face, and said, "God has

called you to preach the gospel; you have long rejected the call; but he will make you go; obey the call, obey the call." He now resolved to make a trial. He preached his first sermon at Bramley, about four miles from Leeds, and again the same day at Armley. Immediately he was employed by the preachers, and soon after went into Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and Derbyshire. He introduced Methodism at Ashbourn, and Burton-upon-Trent; and there, and at Leek, and some other places, suffered much persecution, and very narrowly escaped being killed.

He says, "In weariness and painfulness, in hunger and thirst, in joy and sorrow, in weakness and trembling, were my days now spent. And I have often thought, if God would excuse me from this hard task, how gladly should I embrace the life of a shoe-black, or of a shepherd's boy. I was surrounded with death, and could seldom expect to survive another day, because of the fury of the people. And yet it was, *Woe unto thee, if thou preach not the gospel.*"

In 1775, he was sent to Canterbury. It was about eight o'clock at night, when he got within sight of the lamps of the city: just then, two men with large pistols, rushed upon him, and demanded his money: he had only two shillings and eight pence; but they took this, and also his watch. But he believed that this robbery was permitted for good. At that time an invasion was expected from France; Canterbury was full of soldiers, and they were two soldiers who committed the robbery. The report of this excited the curiosity of their comrades to come and hear the preacher who had been robbed. And many of them were awakened out of the sleep of sin, and joined the society.

Several of the following years he spent in Scotland. And he deemed this, in general, the happiest period of his life.

In this brief sketch of the history and character of this excellent man, it may be sufficient to say, that he was employed as an itinerant preacher for more than forty years; that in all this time his morals were unimpeachable; and that both as a Christian and a preacher, he was highly esteemed. He was a man of an ex-

cellent spirit; and eminently endowed with the meekness of wisdom. In matters of conscience, he displayed true Christian fortitude. He was chosen president of the conference held in Bristol in the year 1794, and was the first person, after Mr. Wesley, who filled that office, that was called from the church militant to the church triumphant.

The next character which I shall introduce is that of

MR. THOMAS WEBB,

who was a principal instrument of introducing Methodism into North America; he was not a travelling preacher, but a military officer, and well known by the name of Captain Webb. In the campaign of 1758, in which General Wolfe conquered Quebec, and lost his life, Captain Webb received a wound in his arm, and lost his right eye; religion had no place in his heart at this time. But in 1764, he was enlightened to see that he was a sinner; and so great a sinner, that he almost despaired of mercy. In 1765, the Lord brought him out of the horrible pit, and the miry clay, and set his feet upon a rock, and established his goings. Yea, he put a new song into his mouth, even of praise and thanksgiving to God. During this period he had no director but the Lord. However, quickly afterwards he became acquainted with Mr. Roquet, an evangelical minister in the established church, and through him, with the Methodists, when he soon resolved, "This people shall be my people, and their God my God."

The first time he appeared as a public speaker, was in Bath. The preacher who was expected not coming, he was desired to speak a little to the congregation.—He dwelt chiefly upon his own experience, and the people were satisfied and refreshed. It was not long after this, that he was appointed *Barrack Master of Albany*, and went to America; when he arrived there, he regularly performed family prayer in his own house; some of his neighbours frequently attended. He often gave them a word of exhortation, and the encouragement he met with emboldened him to extend his labours.

Under God, he was one of the first instruments of

planting Methodism on the continent of America. And there he erected the *first* Methodist chapel, which was in the city of New-York. In that city he preached with great success. He wrote to Mr. Wesley, entreating him to send preachers to America: who accordingly in 1769, sent Mr. Richard Boardman, and Mr. Joseph Pilmore. After his return to England, Mr. Webb took up his residence at Bristol, and preached there, as well as in many places adjacent. In general, great multitudes flocked to hear him; many of whom did not hear in vain. He was instrumental in turning many from the ways of folly and sin to the paths of wisdom and holiness. Mr. Wesley mentions in his Journal, coming to a place where Captain Webb had lately been.—"The Captain," says he, "is all life and fire, and therefore many will hear him that will not hear a better preacher. And it is very well they do, for he does a great deal of good."

His death, although remarkably sudden, was not unexpected by him. For some time he appeared to have had a pre-sentiment of his approaching departure, and a few days before he was called hence, he expressed his wishes to a person concerning the *place* and *manner* of his interment. At the same time he said, "I should prefer a triumphant death: but I may be taken away suddenly. However, I know I am happy in the Lord, and shall be with him, and that is sufficient." A little before ten o'clock in the evening, December 20th, 1796, after taking his supper, and praying with his family, he went to bed, apparently in as good health as usual. But shortly his breathing became difficult. He arose, and sat at the foot of the bed: but while Mrs. Webb was standing by him, he fell back on the bed, and before any other person could be called, without a struggle or groan, he gave up the ghost, aged 72 years.

I shall next introduce the character of

Mr. Thomas Mitchell,

who was born in the parish of Bingley, in the West-Riding of Yorkshire, December 3d, 1726. During the rebellion of 1745, he became a soldier, and continued

so for about a year. Before this he had felt some fear of God, and had frequently employed himself in prayer; and after his discharge from the army, he joined the Methodist society. He several times heard John Nelson to his profit; and under the ministry of Mr. Grimshaw, was convinced that salvation is through faith; and that the greatest of sinners may be saved by believing in Christ Jesus. He heard Mr. Charles Wesley preach a sermon, in which he clearly shewed, that Christ is both able and willing to save the very chief of sinners. But when he asserted that we may *know* our sins forgiven, Mr. Mitchell was slow of heart to believe his testimony. However, he continued in prayer; and in a few days was convinced, from joyful experience, that this doctrine was true. His guilty fears fled away, and he was filled with peace, and love to God and his neighbour. He saw and felt God to be his salvation, and he could trust in him without fear, and praise him with joyful lips.

After many trials and deliverances, he felt a desire to turn others to the Lord. He saw his neighbours abounding in all manner of wickedness, and no man caring for their souls, or warning them to flee from the wrath to come. He saw his unfitness to speak in the name of the Lord, but yet began to reprove sin wherever he saw it. For this he was hated; but God endued him with courage. However, as yet, he doubted whether it was his duty to preach. But, in fear and trembling, he ventured to make a trial, and was encouraged by one person being convinced of sin. Some of his friends, nevertheless, were not satisfied that he was called to be a preacher; and he himself frequently doubted. He had great mental exercises for some time, but at last clearly saw his way.

About this time, he met with much persecuting abuse at Yeadon and Guisely. In the day time he laboured diligently with his hands at his business, (that of a mason,) and employed his evenings in calling sinners to repentance. While doing this he was often interrupted by furious mobs. He made excursions, and preached in many places round about, with some success. He went into Lancashire, and after some time, formed a regular circuit. But in one place, a mob of women put him in-

to a pond, the water of which took him nearly over the head, but he got safely out. He continued to labour, encouraged by the example and advice of good Mr. Grimshaw.

In 1751, on Sunday, August 7, he preached at five o'clock in the morning, at a place called Rangedale in Lincolnshire. About six, two constables came at the head of a large mob; they violently broke in upon the people, seized upon him, pulled him down, and took him to a public house, where they kept him till four in the afternoon. They then inquired of the minister whether they might let him go. The answer was, they must not let him go yet. So they took him out to the mob, which hurried him away, and threw him into a pool of standing water, which took him up to the neck. He strove to get out, but they pushed him in again, till having gone through it seven times, they let him come out. A man stood ready with a pot full of white paint, with which he painted him all over from head to foot, and then they took him to the public-house again.—Here they kept him till they had put five of his friends into the water. They then took Mr. Mitchell to a great pond, which was ten or twelve feet deep, and surrounded with rails. Four men took him by the legs and arms, and swung him backward and forward. For a moment he felt his flesh shrink, but it was quickly gone. He gave himself up to the Lord, and was content that his will should be done. At length they threw him as far as they could into the water. The fall and the water soon took away his senses, so that he felt nothing more. But some of them were not willing he should be drowned. So they watched till he came above the water, and then caught hold of his clothes with a long pole, and made shift to drag him out. For some time he lay upon the ground senseless. When he came to himself, he saw only two men standing by him. One of them helped him up, and took him to a small house, where they put him to bed. But shortly the mob came again, pulled him out of bed, carried him into the street, and swore they would take away one of his limbs if he would not promise to come there no more. He told them he could promise no such thing. But the man who had

hold of him, pretended to promise for him, and so he was again put to bed. Some of the mob then went again to the minister, to know what they must do with Mr. Mitchell. The minister said, "You must take him out of the parish." So they came and took him out of bed a second time. But he had no clothes to put on; his own being wet, as well as covered with paint. But they put an old coat about him, took him about a mile, and set him upon a little hill. They shouted three times, "God save the king, and the devil take the preacher," and then left him. Here he was left without a penny in his pocket, or a friend to help him, for no one dare come near him. But though his strength was nearly exhausted, he with difficulty reached the house of a friend, at some distance. In the midst of persecution he saw much fruit of his labour; many were brought to know, love, and serve God; and as the sufferings of Christ abounded, the consolations by Christ abounded also. And as to these lions of Rangedale, an appeal to the Court of King's Bench made both them and their minister as quiet as lambs.

It might be too tedious to give a regular detail of Mr. Mitchell's travels, ministerial labours, and afflictions, during the remaining part of his life, which was continued above thirty years after this. Most of this time he was a travelling preacher. But the infirmities of age grew upon him, till he was obliged to sit down, and to preach only occasionally. His doctrines and his life agreed.

The most striking trait in his character, as a preacher, was his plain and familiar style of speaking. He had a remarkable art of explaining some of the most important ideas in religion, by the most plain and simple comparisons. He entered into all the minutia, and all the feelings of poverty, family trials, and general affliction, and was truly an able minister in comforting the distressed, and encouraging the poor, the tempted, and those who were cast down. And though his plain and striking comparisons would sometimes make his congregations smile, yet the greatest gravity was ever visible upon his own countenance. He was an admirable poor man's preacher, and well deserved the attention of the

rich. Nay, it is said, the discerning and philosophical Dr. Priestly has gone to hear him preach at five o'clock in a morning, and greatly admired his plain, artless discourses. In such language as might be expected from the Doctor, he expressed his high approbation of Mr. Mitchell, by saying, "Other men *may* do good; but this man *must* do good; for it is all he aims at." When near death, his old friend, Mr. Hampson, senior, called upon him, and inquiring into the state of his mind, he answered, "I have been winding and winding all these years, and it just winds up at last." He died in peace, and in joyful expectation of entering into endless felicity. In the conference report of his death, he is called "an old soldier of Jesus Christ."

I shall only add, he had far more real talents than some who have been thought greatly his superiors, and his plain, and truly original discourses, were of far more genuine use, than those whose qualifications have been of a more popular and splendid description. One thing at least, was ever apparent, that he was not a prophet who *borrowed the word from his neighbour.* "The proper way," said he once to me, "is for a man to cultivate his own natural talent, and not to attempt to imitate any man."

It would be an agreeable exercise to sketch the lives and characters of many more preachers, but I wish not to swell my book.

CHAPTER II.

THE DOCTRINES BELIEVED AND TAUGHT BY THE METHODISTS.

IN giving "a full and explicit statement" of the Doctrines of "the Methodists," it will be peculiarly proper to insert some abstracts of Mr. Wesley's writings upon the subject under consideration. His first four volumes of Sermons, united with his Notes on the

New Testament may be properly termed, The *Test* of the Doctrines among them. In most of the Deeds of Trust belonging to our chapels, it is inserted, that no preacher shall be suffered to preach there, who preaches any other doctrines than those contained in the Sermons and Notes. And that preacher must be one appointed by the conference. But there are other books which were published by Mr. Wesley, and have been continued to be printed and sold ever since his death, under the authority and direction of the conference which are of equal authority in ascertaining the genuine Doctrines of Methodism, with this exception, that they are not mentioned in the Deeds of Trust. With something from some of these authorized publication, I purpose to conclude each article in the statement of doctrines, at least such as particularly distinguish the Methodists from Christians of other denominations. Indeed, in the main outlines, the Doctrines of Methodism differ very little, if at all, from those contained in the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy of the Church of England.

What I have inserted from Mr. Wesley's writings, is in general, as nearly in his own words as was practicable in making such extracts. Whatever little variation there may be from his language, there is no departure from his *ideas*. His sentiments are without addition or diminution, faithfully exhibited to the reader. And these opinions are (perhaps with a little want of uniformity as ever existed among any denomination of Christians, at least of a body so numerous,) the sentiments of the preachers and people composing the Methodist connexion.

It may not be improper to observe, that I do not so much profess to *defend* Methodism, as to *explain* it. And, indeed, I think a true portraiture of the history, doctrines, and disciplines of the Methodists, their *best* and *only necessary* defence.

On the Object of Worship.

1. The Methodists believe, concerning God and his attributes, that there *is one* God; that his existence is from everlasting to everlasting; that God is a Spirit;

that he is present in every place; knows every thing; is almighty in power; is true and faithful; pure and holy; perfectly just; and yet unspeakably merciful.—They believe further, that in the Unity of the Godhead there are Three Persons of one substance, power, and eternal existence, the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Holy Ghost*.

An extract from Mr. Wesley's sermon "On the Trinity," may come in here with propriety. The text is, 1 John v. 7. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

He observes, that opinion, yea, even right opinion, is not religion. Persons may be quite right in their opinions, and yet have no religion at all. Can any one doubt this, while there are Romanists in the world? Many of them have been truly religious in former times, such as Gregory Lopez, Thomas-a-Kempis, and the Marquis de Renty, and many of them, at this day, are real inward Christians. And yet what a heap of erroneous opinions do they hold, delivered by tradition from their fathers? Nay, who can doubt it, while there are assertors of absolute predestination? Many of these in the last century were burning and shining lights, and many of them are now real Christians, loving God and all mankind. And yet, what absurdity equal to that, that one part of mankind shall be saved, do what they will, and the rest damned, do what they can! Hence we infer, there are many mistakes which may consist with true religion. But there are some truths more important than others; some of very deep importance, as having a close connexion with vital religion. And doubtless we may rank among these, that contained in the words of the text. I do not mean, that it is of importance to believe this or that *explication* of these words. I know not that any well judging man would attempt to explain them at all. One of the best tracts which Dean Swift ever wrote, was his sermon upon the Trinity. In this he shows, that all who have endeavoured to explain it at all, have utterly lost their way: have above all other persons hurt the cause which they intended to promote; have only, as Job speaks, *darkened*

counsel by words without knowledge. I insist upon no explication at all; no, not even the best I ever saw; I mean that which is given us in the creed commonly ascribed to *Athanasius.* I am far from saying, he who does not assent to this, "Shall, without doubt, perish everlastingly." I dare not insist upon any one using the word *Trinity* or *Person.* I use them myself without scruple, because I know of none better. But if any man has any scruple concerning them, who shall constrain him to use them? I would insist only on the words unexplained just as they lie in the text, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

Some have doubted whether the text was written by the apostle, or inserted in latter ages, particularly *Bengelius.* But his doubts were removed by three considerations. 1. Though it is wanting in many copies, yet it is found in many more, and those copies of the greatest authority. 2. It is cited by a whole train of ancient writers, from the time of St. John to that of *Constantine.* This argument is conclusive: for they could not have cited it, had it not then been in the sacred canon. 3. We can easily account for its being wanting after that time in many copies, when we remember that *Constantine's* successor was a zealous Arian, who used every means to promote his bad cause, and to spread Arianism through the empire: in particular, erasing this text out of as many copies as fell into his hands. And he so far prevailed, that the age in which he lived is commonly called, The Arian Age: there being only one eminent man who opposed him at the peril of his life. So that it was a proverb, "*Athanasius* against the world."

But it is objected, "Whatever becomes of the text, we cannot believe what we cannot comprehend.—When, therefore you require us to believe mysteries, we pray you to have us excused." Here is a two-fold mistake. We do not require you to believe any mystery in this, as you suppose. But you do already believe many things which you cannot comprehend.—You believe there is a *sun* over your head. But you cannot comprehend *how* he moves, or *how* he rests; or by what power he is upheld in the fluid ether. The

fact you cannot deny; but you cannot *account* for it so as to satisfy any rational inquirer. The *manner* you cannot comprehend.

You believe there is such a thing as *light*, whether flowing from the sun, or any other luminous body. But you cannot comprehend either its nature, or the manner in which it flows. How does it move from Jupiter to the earth in eight minutes, two hundred thousand miles in a moment? How do the rays of a candle brought into a room, instantly disperse into every corner? Again, here are three candles, yet there is but one light. Explain this, and I will explain the Three-One-God.

You believe there is such a thing as *air*. It both covers you as a garment, and, "wide interfused embraces round this florid earth." But can you comprehend how? Can you give me a satisfactory account of its nature, or of its properties? By no means.

You believe there is such a thing as *earth*. You stand upon it. It supports you. But what supports the earth? We know it is God that *spreadeth out the north over the empty space, and hangeth the earth upon nothing*." But who can account for this? I know what is said concerning the powers of projection and attraction. But matter of fact sweeps away the hypothesis. Connect the force of projection and attraction how you can, they will never produce a circular motion. The moment the projected steel comes within the attraction of the magnet, it does not form a curve, but drops down.

You believe you have a *soul*, connected with your body. But can you tell how? Can you comprehend what are the ties that unite the heavenly flame with the earthly clod? You know it *is so;* but *how*, none can tell.

You believe you have a *body* together with your soul, and that each is dependent on the other. Only run a thorn into your hand: immediately pain is felt in your soul. And if shame be felt in the soul, a blush instantly overspreads your cheek. If the soul feels fear, or violent anger, the body trembles. At the command of your soul, your hand is lifted up. But who can account

for this act of the mind and the outward actions? Nay, who can account for *muscular motion* at all?

The plain inference is this: those who will not believe any thing but what they can comprehend, must not believe there is a *sun*, that there is either *light* or *air;* that there is any *earth*, though they stand upon it, or that they have either *soul* or *body*.

You are not required to believe any mystery in the matter. It is only the *fact* you are required to believe; and the mystery does not lie in the *fact* but in the *manner*. God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." I believe this as to *fact;* but as to the *manner* of it, I believe nothing, and know nothing. *The Word was made flesh.* I believe this *fact* also. But as to the *manner* of his being flesh, wherein alone the mystery lies, I know nothing about it, and I believe nothing about it. It is no more the object of my faith, than it is the object of my understanding. To apply this to the case before us. *There are three that bear record in heaven, and these three are one.* I believe this *fact* also, (if I may use the expression) that God is Three and One. But the *manner how*, I do not comprehend: I do not believe it. It is in the *manner* that the mystery lies: and let it lie there; for I have nothing to do with it. It is no object of my faith; I believe just as much as God has revealed, and no more. The *manner* he has not revealed, and therefore I have nothing to do with it. But would it not be absurd in me to deny the *fact*, because I do not understand the *manner?* That is, to reject what God *has revealed*, because I do not comprehend *what he has not revealed.* This is a point much to be observed.—There are many things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive." Part of these God hath "revealed to us by his Spirit:" that is unveiled or uncovered. This part he requires us to believe. But part of these things he has not revealed: and that part we need not, and indeed cannot believe.

Is it right to reject what is revealed, because we cannot understand what is *not* revealed? What God has been pleased to reveal upon this subject is a truth of the utmost importance. It is the center and root of all

genuine Christianity. Unless they admit the divinity of the Son of God, how can they *honour the Son even as they honour the Father?* And it is written, *Let all the angels of God worship him.*

The knowledge of the Three-One-God is interwoven with all true Christian faith, and with all vital religion. I know not how any one can be a Christian believer, till he *hath* (as St. John speaks) *the witness in himself: till the Spirit of God witnesses with his spirit, that he is a child of God:* that is, in effect, till God the Holy Ghost witnesses, that God the Father has accepted him, through the merits of God the Son: and having this witness, he honours the Son, and the blessed Spirit, *even as he honours the Father.*

The Methodists believe, that Jesus Christ is strictly and properly God, and at the same time man, and that he was incarnate by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, lived a perfect holy life, proved himself to be the Son of God, and the true Messiah, by many signs and wonders, was crucified under the government of Pontius Pilate, died, and by his sufferings and death atoned for the sins of the world; that he rose again from the dead the third day, ascended into heaven, now sits at the right hand of the Father, having all power in the kingdoms of providence and of grace put into his hands; that he intercedes for men, and especially for true Christians; that he will come again with power and great glory, to judge the world in righteousness, and assign to all their eternal state and condition.—And they further believe, that Jesus Christ received of the Father the gift of the Holy Ghost, and shed him forth abundantly on his immediate followers, both in his miraculous and regenerating influences; that he still gives this Holy Spirit to them that ask him, to illuminate, comfort, strengthen, and sanctify them; and that if we have not the Spirit of Christ we are not Christians.

An analysis of Dr. Coke's sermon "On the Godhead of Christ," will give the reader an idea of the opinion of the Methodists on that important subject. The text is, John i. 1. "THE WORD WAS GOD." After an appropriate and interesting exordium, the Doctor proceeds to state,

1. The several instances that represent our Lord as a most extraordinary personage: and first, the many signs and presages that he *should become* such. The salutation of his virgin Mother,—the interview between Mary and Elizabeth,—the star that appeared to the wise men in the east,—the appearance of the angel to the shepherds at Bethlehem,—the anthem there sung by the heavenly choir, and the message delivered to Joseph in a dream, directing him to take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt. The expectations raised by these signs were not disappointed, when he entered on his most important sphere of action.—This was manifested by his disputation with the doctors in the temple;—the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him when baptized of John in Jordan, accompanied with the voice from heaven, in conjunction with the testimony of the Baptist;—his fasting, combat with, and victory over the devil in the wilderness:—his speaking "as never man spake;" his miracles, by which he turned water into wine, drove the multitude out of the temple, healed the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, fed multitudes with a few loaves and fishes, while more provision was found after they were filled than when they began to eat:—raised from the dead Jarius' daughter,—the widow's son of Nain, and more especially his beloved friend Lazarus. The same proof was given, by his restoring sight to the blind, yea, such as were born blind,—by the withering of the fig-tree after he had cursed it,—by the obedience which the winds and the seas yielded to his commands,—his walking on the sea, and many more amazing and beneficent miracles. Other proofs of the dignity and importance of his person and mission, may be gathered from his transfiguration in the mount;—the testimony of the very devils, that he was the Holy One of God,—the miracles which his apostles wrought in and by his name, and the various wonders which attended his sufferings and death.

II. Let us proceed to prove by the scripture account, that Christ is God in the highest and fullest sense of the word. We may argue *indirectly*, by drawing plain consequences. He is said to be "in the form of

God, and equal with him," Phil. ii. 6. To have "all the fulness of the godhead dwelling in him bodily," Col. ii. 9. To be "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person," Heb. i. 3.—To be more particular, let us consider our Saviour, 1. In respect to the *attributes* of God. (1.) His *eternity*. He is from everlasting to everlasting, Rev. i. 8, 11, 17. xxii. 13. He is "Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, who was, and is, and is to come." (2.) He is *omnipotent*, Rev. i. 8. Phil. iii. 21. "The Almighty," and "able to subdue *all things* unto himself." (3.) He is *omniscient*, John ii. 24, 25, xxi. 17. xvi. 30. "He knew all men," "what was in man," and "all things." (4.) He is *omnipresent*, Matt. xviii. 20. xxviii. 20. "In the midst," of "two or three," "*wherever* gathered together," and "with his disciples *always*, even unto the end of the world." He is (5.) *immutable*, Heb. xiii. 8. i. 10, 12. "The same yesterday, to day, and for ever," and "his years shall not fail."

2. All the *honours* of the Most High are paid to the name of Christ, and that whether internal or external. And (1.) all internal honours. He is the proper object of faith, John iii. 36. xiv. 1. "*Believe* in me." "He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting," &c. He is the object of "hope," 1 Tim. i. 1. Of "love," 1 Cor. xvi. 22. (2.) Outward acts of worship are paid to him, Luke xxiv. 52. Acts vii. 59. 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. The apostles, and others, "worshipped him," Stephen said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," and Paul "besought the Lord (Jesus) thrice." "Every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord," Phil. ii. 10. The angels are commanded to worship him, Heb. i. 6.

3. All the *works* of the Most High are ascribed to him. And, (1.) the work of *creation*, John i. 3. Col. i. 14—17. Heb. 1. 8, 10. "All things were made by him," he "laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of his hands." (2.) The *preservation* of all things is ascribed to him, Col. i. 17. Heb. i. 3. "By him all things consist," and he "upholds all things." (3.) Forgiveness of sins is ascribed to him, Matt. ix. 6. Luke vii. 4, 8. "The Son of man hath

power on earth to forgive sins." "Thy sins are forgiven thee." (4.) All his miracles were wrought *in his own name*, or by his own immediate power. It was so when he healed the Centurion's servant,—Peter's wife's mother,—the son of the nobleman of Capernaum,—the man at Bethesda's pool,—the man afflicted with the palsy,—the woman who had been long afflicted with the issue of blood,—the man with the withered hand, and the daughter of the woman of Canaan; and the case was the same, when he raised the three different persons from the dead. See John v. 19. "What things soever he (the Father) doth, these also doth the Son likewise." Lastly, the works of grace and regeneration are attributed to him, Rom. i. 7. "Grace be to you, and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." This is Paul's usual salutation in the beginning of his epistles. "Without me ye can do nothing," John xv. 5. And the Spirit, by whose operations every good is wrought in the soul of man, is frequently styled, *the Spirit of Christ.*

The divinity of Christ may be proved *directly*, by passages of scripture, in which he is called *God*, or *Jehovah*, or *Lord of Hosts;* as well as from the titles adjoined to the word *God*, when applied to our Saviour, so as to restrain the word to its most proper and highest signification, and to demonstrate him to be God by *nature*, and not by *office* only. Read Isa. vi. 1, 2, 3. "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, and his train filled the temple," &c. "And they cried, holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts," &c. And again ver. 5. the prophet says, "Mine eyes have seen the King, *the Lord of Hosts.*" It is evident from John xii. 41. that these words were spoken of our Lord. "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him."

We must not overlook the remarkable declaration of our Lord, John viii. 58. Before *Abraham* was, I AM: ascribing to himself the incommunicable name of the self-existent God. The text says, "*The Word was God.*" Thomas said, "my Lord, and my God," John xx. 28. "Feed the church of God," said Paul, "which he hath purchased with *his own blood*," Acts xx. 28. "Christ who is over all, God blessed for ever," Rom.

ix. 5. "*God* manifested in the flesh," 1 Tim. iii. 16. "Hereby perceive we the love of *God*, because *he* laid down his life for us," 1 John iii. 16. Read also Heb. i. 8. and Psalm xlv. Such titles are adjoined to the word *God*, when applied to our Saviour, as demonstrate him to be God by *nature*, and not by *office* only. "*The true God*," 1 John v. 20. "*The great God*," Tit. ii. 13. "*The mighty God*," Isa. ix. 6. "*The Lord of Glory*," 1 Cor. ii. 8. "*The King of kings, and Lord of lords*," Rev. xvii. 14. "*The everlasting Father*," Isa. ix. 6.

We may well confess, with John, in the words of the text, "THE WORD WAS GOD."

The Creation.

II. The Methodists believe, that God created the world, visible and invisible, together with angels, men, and every thing that is, and hath life. They believe, that God made man, with *a design* that he should know, love, and be happy with God for ever; that he made man's body out of the dust, and his soul out of nothing, after his own image in knowledge and true holiness, with power sufficient to have stood, and yet possessed of such liberty of choice that he might fall; that man was placed in the garden of Paradise, and was commanded not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

The Fall of Man.

III. But the Methodists believe, that man transgressed the commandment of God, and brought on himself thereby sin and guilt, pain and death; and that he brought the same evils upon all his posterity; that all men are born in sin, and subject to pain and death.—They believe that man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually; being proud, self-willed, loving the world with an idolatrous affection, and at enmity with God, not subject to the law of God, nor capable of being so, till regenerated by grace.

In a small treatise on "*Original sin*, extracted from a late author," and published by Mr. Wesley, are the

following propositions. The same sentiment, more largely explained, may be found in his "Answer to Dr. Taylor."

"*God made man upright.*" By man we are to understand our first parents, Adam and Eve, the root of all mankind. Man was made upright, that is, straight with the will of God, and without any irregularity in his soul. God made him: and in the act of *making* him, made him *righteous*. With the same breath, he breathed into him a *living* and a *righteous* soul. This righteousness implied a conformity of all the powers of the soul to the law of God. This conformity implied three things. First, his understanding was a lamp of light. He was made in the image of God, in *knowledge* as well as holiness. He had the knowledge of God's will, and also of the works of God. This was proved in his giving such names to the various creatures as expressed their nature. Secondly, his will lay straight with the will of God. In his will was no corruption, or inclination to evil. It was disposed by its original make, to follow the Creator's will, as the shadow does the body. Thirdly, his affections were regular and holy. All his passions, yea all his sensitive motions and inclinations, were subordinate to his reason and will, while they lay straight with the will of God. And he had power answerable to his will, to fulfil the whole will of God.

Man's original righteousness was universal and natural, yet capable of change. 1. It was universal, as the *subject* of it, the *whole man*, and the *object* of it, the *whole law*. 2. It was *natural* to him. This was necessary to the perfection of man. 3. It was mutable. It *might* be lost, as appears from the sad event of its being lost. See Gen. i. 27. Col. iii. 10. Eph. iv. 24. Gen. i. 31. Psalm xxv. 8. And as man was made holy, so he was happy. He enjoyed peace, was loved by God, and had full communion with him. He was also universal Lord over the world, having dominion of the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field, and every thing that moved on the earth. He had external tranquillity; a body beautiful, not capable of being injured by the air, nor liable to diseases, nor subject to toil and weariness. He was made im-

mortal. He would never have died if he had not sinned. Death was threatened only in case of sin, and came into the world by sin. But our nature is now entirely corrupted. Where *was* no evil, is now no good. This may be proved, 1. By *God's word.* Compare Gen. v. ver. 1. with ver. 5. and see Job xiv. 4. John iii. 6. Col. ii. 11. 2. *Experience* proves it. What a flood of miseries overflow the world! Some are oppressed with poverty; some are in pain or sickness; some are lamenting their losses; and none without some cross: no man's condition is so soft, but there is some thorn of uneasiness; till death comes, sooner or later, and sweeps all off the earth. 3. The corruption of nature is dicovered early in children. What pride, vanity, self-will, and perverseness! 4. Behold the bitter fruits of corrupt nature! "*The wickedness of man is great in the earth.*" The world is filled with all manner of filthiness, unrighteousness and impiety. 5. Since Cain shed Abel's blood, the world has been a slaughterhouse, and on the earth, and in the seas, the greater creatures have constantly been devouring the lesser. 6. Corruption is so strong in man, that *human* laws are necessary, fenced with terrors and severities. 7. Consider the *remains* of corruption in believers in Christ Jesus, who imperfectly fear, worship, love, and serve God.

Let us add, sin rages the more in man, the more God seeks to restrain it; men care more for the body than the soul: are generally discontented with the lot assigned them by a good and wise Providence: sinners seek after secrecy; are unwilling to acknowledge their sin; they endeavour to extenuate their guilt, and to transfer it to others. To be a little more particular in our description of human nature. Man in his natural state is altogether corrupt, through all the faculties of his soul. 1. The understanding is covered with darkness in spiritual things. The unrenewed part of mankind are rambling through the world, like blind men, who will neither take a guide nor can guide themselves, and therefore fall over the precipice into destruction. And the dark mind is averse to spiritual light. 2. The will is equally degenerated. It is averse

to good; it rebels against light; and is prone to evil. 3. The affections are disordered, earthly, sensual, and devilish. 4. The conscience is blind, sleepy, and defiled with guilt.

In the first four volumes of Mr. Wesley's Discourses, he has a sermon on "original sin," Gen. vi. 5. In this he undertakes to show,

I. What men were before the deluge. The *wickedness of man was great:* not barely a few, or the greater part, but of *man in general*, of men universally. The word includes the whole human race. *All the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart*, of his soul, *were only evil*, and that *continually*. There was *no* good mingled with evil, nor light with darkness. All this was continually; every year, day, hour, and moment.

II. But are men the same *now?* I answer, 1. The scripture gives us no reason to think otherwise of man. Above a thousand years after the flood, God said by David, "*They are all gone out of the way* of truth and holiness, *there is none righteous, no, not one.*" And all the prophets, in their several generations, bore witness to this humbling truth. 2. This account is confirmed by daily experience. *Every man living, is altogether vanity*, that is, folly, ignorance, sin, and wickedness. 3. Men are *without God*, or rather atheists in the world. 4. Were men brought up without any religious instructions, they would not (unless grace prevented) have any religion at all. 5. As we have no knowledge, so we have no love, or fear of God. We are proud, self-willed, lovers of the world, seeking happiness in the creature, in the pleasures of sense; and sensual appetites lead us captive. We are enslaved by *the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life.*

III. We may infer, 1. The difference between heathenism and Christianity. *They* believe that man was *evil* in some things; but that in some, the good overbalanced the evil. 2. The nature of the religion of Jesus Christ. It is God's method of healing a soul which is thus deceased.

Salvation only through Christ.

IV. The Methodists believe that man cannot be re-

stored from his fall, and enjoy pardon, adoption, holiness, and heaven, but in and through Jesus Christ; that through his living, suffering, dying, rising again, ascending into heaven, and there ever living to make intercession for us, salvation is offered to, and attainable by all. They believe that he gave himself a ransom for all; that gospel salvation is sincerely offered to all; that those who are not saved, must eternally blame themselves only; and yet they believe, that we are not saved by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his own free mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and that salvation now, as well as heaven hereafter, is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In his sermon, entitled, "*The Lord our Righteousness*," Jeremiah xxiii. 6. he remarks, "This is a truth which enters deep into the nature of Christianity: the Christian church stands or falls with it. It is certainly the pillar and ground of that faith, of which alone cometh salvation: of that catholic or universal faith, which is found in all the children of God, and which, "unless a man keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly." I will endeavour to show, says he,

I. What is the righteousness of Christ. It is either his divine or his human righteousness. 1. His divine righteousness belongs to his divine nature, as he is *He that existeth over all, God, blessed for ever:* the Supreme, the Eternal: "equal with the Father, as touching his godhead, though inferior to the Father, as touching his manhood." Now this is his eternal, essential, immutable holiness, his infinite justice, mercy, and truth: in all which *he and the Father are one.* But I do not apprehend that the divine righteousness of Christ is immediately concerned in the present question. Few, if any, contend for the *imputation* of *this* righteousness. Whoever believes the doctrine of imputation, understands it chiefly, if not solely, of his human righteousness. 2. The *human righteousness* of Christ belongs to him in his human nature: as he is *the mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.* This is either *internal* or *external.* His internal righteousness is the image of God, stamped on every power and faculty of his soul.

It is a transcript of his divine purity, justice, mercy, and love. It includes love, reverence, and resignation to his Father; humility, meekness, gentleness; love to lost mankind, and every other holy and heavenly temper; and all these in the highest degree, without any defect, or mixture of unholiness. It was the least part of his external righteousness, that he did nothing amiss, knowing no sin, nor having guile found in his mouth. This was only *negative* righteousness. But even his outward righteousness was *positive* too. *He did all things well.* In every word and work, in the whole course of his life, he did *the will of him that sent him.* 3. His obedience implied his sufferings also, when *he bore our sins in his own body on the tree.* But,

II. *When* is the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in *what sense* is it imputed? 1. To *all believers*, the righteousness of Christ is imputed; to all unbelievers it is not. And it is imputed *when* a man believes, as soon *as* he believes; for faith and the righteousness of Christ are inseparable. But, 2. In *what sense* is the righteousness of Christ imputed to us? In this sense: all believers are forgiven and accepted, not for the sake of any thing in them, or any thing that ever was, that is, or can be done by them, but wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for them. See Tit. iii. 5. We are *justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.* And this is not only the means of *obtaining* the favour of God, but of our *continuing* therein. "And this is the doctrine," adds Mr. Wesley, "which I have constantly believed and taught, which I published in 1738, and ten or twelve times since;" that is, he had *published* the doctrine thus in *print*: for he was *constantly* publishing it in preaching. The hymns published, and re-published so many times, speak fully to the same purpose. Take one for all.

> "Jesus, thy blood and righteousness,
> My beauty are, my glorious dress:
> 'Midst flaming worlds in these array'd,
> With joy I shall lift up my head." &c.

See large hymn-book, page 186, hymn 183. The reader has here a fair epitome of this interesting discourse.

The Plan of Salvation.

V. The Methodists believe, that although salvation is attainable by all, yet that none will be saved, but those who comply with the terms of salvation, as expressed in the holy scriptures. And they believe, that these terms are, 1. Repentance towards God. Sinful and guilty man is commanded to repent, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance. This repentance, they believe, implies, (1.) A conviction that we have done the things we ought not to have done, and left undone those things which we ought to have done; that all we like sheep have gone astray, and have turned every one to his own way; that we are guilty before God, and, if we die in this state, must be turned into hell. (2.) They believe, that repentance includes *contrition* for sin. To true penitents, the remembrance of their sins will be grevious, and the burthen intolerable. They believe, (3.) That true repentance will produce confession of sin. Of this they find many instances in the bible. (4.) Above all, they believe, that true repentance implies reformation, and that all who repent will bring forth fruits meet for repentance, by ceasing to do evil and learning to do well; that a penitent is humbled, hates his sins, and turns from them, purposing to walk in the way of God's commandments. They believe, 2. That in order to be saved, it is absolutely necessary that we should have faith: and faith includes, (1.) A conviction of those unseen things which God has told us in the bible: that a believer receives all those important truths contained in "the faith once delivered to the saints, called in holy scripture, "the form of sound words," "the mystery of faith," and "the faith of the gospel:" that to true believers, the gospel has "come, not in word only, but also in power," influencing the heart and life, "and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance:" that a true believer is not only persuaded of the *truth* and *importance* of the gospel, but trembles at its *threatenings*, embraces its *promises*, and yields obedience to its *commands*. (2.) They believe, the principal act of the faith that brings salvation is, to *receive* Jesus Christ in all his mediatorial offices, trusting

in him, and the promises of God through him, for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, according to the new covenant.

One of the first sermons which Mr. Wesley published, he entitled "Salvation by Faith." Eph. ii. 8. Here he enquires,

I. What faith it is through which we are saved. 1. It is not barely the faith of a heathen. God requires a heathen to believe *That God is*, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. A Greek or Roman heathen was without excuse, if he did not believe the being and attributes of God, a future state of rewards and punishments, and the obligatory nature of moral virtue. 2. It is not the faith of a devil, though that goes much farther than the faith of a heathen. No doubt the devil believes not only the being and attributes of God, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and the Saviour of the world; but also the truth and divinity of the holy scriptures, Luke iv. 34. James ii. 19. Acts xvi. 16—18. 3. The faith whereby we are saved, is not barely that which the apostles themselves had while Jesus was yet upon earth, though they so believed on him as to forsake all and follow him, and had power to work many miracles. 4. The faith whereby we are saved, is, (1.) A faith in Christ; Christ, and God through Christ, are the proper objects of it. This differs from the faith of a heathen: *he* believes nothing about Christ. (2.) It is distinguished from the faith of a devil, as it is not barely speculative, but implies a disposition of the heart. "*With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.*" "*If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus*, and shalt believe with thy HEART, *that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved*," Acts viii. 37. 5. This faith differs from that which the apostles had while Christ was upon earth, as it acknowledges the *necessity* and *merit* of his death, and the power of his resurrection. It acknowledges his death as the only means of redeeming man from death eternal; and his resurrection as the restoration of us all to life and immortality: inasmuch as *he was delivered for our sins, and raised again for our justification.* It is a recumbency upon him, as *given for us* and *living in us;*

and in consequence hereof, a closing with him, and cleaving to him, as our *wisdom righteousness, sanctification*, and *redemption*.

II. The salvation which is through this faith, is a present salvation, and that from original and actual sin; from past and present sin; from its guilt and power. (1.) From the guilt of past sin. "We are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." (2.) We are saved from the *fear that hath torment*. Such believers have peace with God; the witness of the Spirit; they love God; and rejoice in hope of his glory. (3.) They are saved from the power of sin. "We know that whatsoever is born of God sinneth not: but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not," 1 John iv. 18. 1 John iii. 5. Such a believer sins not by any *habitual or reigning* sin; by any *wilful* sin; by sinful desires; nor by sins of infirmity, whether in act, word, or thought. His infirmities have not the concurrence of his will; and without this they are not properly sins.

III. Some objections answered. Some object, 1. That preaching salvation by faith, is to preach against holiness and good works. This would be true, if we spoke of a faith that was separate from these. But, on the contrary, we speak of a faith which is necessarily productive of all holiness and good works. We do not make void the law through faith, but we rather establish it; continually enforcing, that all who have believed, should be careful to maintain good works.—2. This doctrine does not lead men into pride, Rom. iii. 27. 3. It gives no just encouragement to sin, but the contrary. 4. It will not drive people to despair; nor is it an uncomfortable doctrine. 5. It ought to be preached as the *first* doctrine, and to be preached to *all*.

Mr. Wesley on "*The way to the Kingdom*," Mark i. 15. says, the words naturally lead us to consider,

"I. The nature of true religion, here termed, *The kingdom of God*. This kingdom is not meats and drinks, Rom. xiv. 17. It does not consist in ritual exercises, nor in any outward thing whatsoever. Not in forms or ceremonies. Nor in orthodoxy, or right opinions.

What is it then? Why, (1.) *Righteousness.* The two grand branches of this are love to God and love to man, Mark xii. 30. This is the fulfilling of the law. (2.) *Peace.* It is a peace that banishes all doubt and painful uncertainty; the Spirit of God bearing witness with the spirit of a Christian that he is a child of God. And it banishes all fear that hath torment; the fear of the wrath of God, the fear of hell, the devil, and in particular, the fear of death: for he that hath the peace of God, desires to be with Christ. (3.) *Joy in the Holy Ghost.* Joy wrought in the heart by the holy Spirit of God. He rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory. And *this kingdom of God is at hand.* It was then at hand, Christ being manifest in the flesh; and wherever the gospel is preached, this kingdom is at hand. Repent and believe the gospel.

"II. Repent, and believe the gospel. (1.) *Repent.* Know that corruption of thy heart whereby thou art very far gone from original righteousness: that there is no soundness in thy soul, but only wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores. Be duly sensible of the sinfulness of thy conduct. Know that the wages of sin is death, and that both bodily and eternal. The soul that sinneth shall die. And thou canst do nothing to appease the wrath of God. Add to this lively conviction of thy inward and outward sins, suitable affections: sorrow of heart for despised mercies, remorse, fear of God's wrath, earnest desire to flee from the wrath to come; cease to do evil, and learn to do well. 2. *Believe the gospel. The gospel,* i. e. good tidings: and sometimes it signifies the whole revelation of God by Jesus Christ. Believe this. By faith thou attainest the promise. But true faith is not a bare assent to the truth of the bible, but a sure trust in the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ. It is a confidence in a pardoning God. It is a divine evidence or conviction, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses: and, in particular, that the Son of God hath loved *me*, and given himself for *me;* and that I, even I, am now reconciled to God by the blood of the cross.

"Dost thou thus believe? Then thou hast the peace

of God. And thou art no longer afraid of hell, or death, or the devil; nor yet painfully afraid of the wrath of God: only thou hast a tender reverential fear of offending him. Dost thou thus believe? Then thou lovest God: and lovest thy brother also; and art filled with holy and heavenly dispositions. And whilst thou beholdest with open face the glory of the Lord, his glorious love, and glorious image, thou art changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord."

Mr. Wesley on "The Scripture Way of Salvation." Eph. ii. 8. inquires,

"I. What is salvation? And he answers, 1. It does not here so much signify future salvation, or going to heaven, as a *present* salvation. "*Ye are* saved by faith," And, he observes, the words may be rendered with equal propriety, ye *have* been saved. So that the salvation here spoken of, might be extended to the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul, till it is consummated in glory. The salvation the apostle is here speaking of, consists of two parts, justification and sanctification. Justification is another word for pardon, the forgiveness of all our sins, and (what is necessarily implied therein,) our acceptance with God. The price of this, is the blood and righteousness of Christ, or all that he did and suffered for us. The immediate effects of justification, are the peace of God, and a rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.

"At the same time that we are justified, yea, that very moment sanctification begins. In that instant we are *born again*, *born from above*, *born of the Spirit*.—There is a *real* as well as *a relative* change. We are inwardly renewed by the power of God. We feel the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto us, producing love to all mankind, more especially to the children of God; expelling the love of the world, the love of pleasure, ease, honour, or money, together with pride, anger, self-will, and every other evil temper. From the time of our being *born again*, the gradual work of sanctification takes place. But,

"II. What is that *faith* through which we are *saved?*

1. Faith in general is defined by the apostle, Heb. xi. 1. *An evidence*, a divine *evidence and conviction*, (the word means both) *of things not seen:* not visible, not perceivable, either by sight, or by any other of the external senses. It implies both a supernatural *evidence* of God and the things of God, a kind of spiritual *light* exhibited to the soul, and a supernatural *sight* or perception thereof: accordingly the scripture speaks of God sometimes giving light, and sometimes a power of discerning it. So St. Paul, "God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And elsewhere he speaks of *the eyes of our understanding being opened.* By this two fold operation of the Holy Ghost, having *the eyes* of our soul both *opened* and *enlightened*, we see the things which the natural *eye hath not seen, neither the ear heard.* 2. Taking the word in a more particular sense, faith is an evidence and conviction, not only that *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;* but also that *Christ loved me, and gave himself for me.* It is by this faith, (whether we term it the *essence*, or rather a *property* thereof,) that we *receive Christ* in all his offices, as our prophet, priest, and king; or wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30. *He that believeth*, with the true living faith, *hath the witness in himself: The Spirit beareth witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God. Because he is a son, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying, Abba, Father:* giving him an assurance that he is so, and a child-like confidence in him. 3. It is by this faith we *are saved*, justified, and sanctified. But,

"III. *How* are we justified and sanctified? And 1. How are we *justified by faith?* I answer, faith is the condition: for none are justified but those who believe. And it is the *only* condition; for all who believe are justified from *all things.* In other words, no man is justified till he believes; but every man who believes is justified. It is true, God commands men to repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance; and these are both necessary, in some sense, to justification.—

Without these we cannot expect to be justified at all. But yet, they are not necessary in the *same sense* with faith. For, repentance and its fruits are only *remotely* necessary; necessary in order to faith: whereas faith *is immediately* and *directly* necessary to justification.—And they are not necessary in the *same degree*. For these fruits of repentance are only necessary *conditionally*, if there be time and opportunity for them, otherwise a man may be justified without them; as the thief upon the cross. But it is impossible for a man to be justified without faith. It remains, that faith is the only condition, which is *immediately* and *proximately* necessary to justification. 2. We are *sanctified* by faith. Exactly as we are *justified* by faith, so are we also *sanctified* by faith. Faith is the condition, and the only condition of sanctification, exactly as it is of justification. None is sanctified but he that believes; but every one who believes is sanctified.

"There is a repentance consequent upon, as well as previous to justification. And it is incumbent upon all who are justified, to be zealous of good works. Otherwise a man cannot expect to be sanctified. He cannot *grow in grace*, in the image of God, in the mind which was in Christ Jesus. Nay, without this, he cannot retain the grace he has received, or continue in faith, or the favour of God. Yet neither repentance, nor good works, however numerous, will avail to sanctify the man; for he cannot be sanctified till he believes.

"The faith, whereby we are sanctified, saved from sin and perfected in love, is a divine evidence and conviction. (1.) That God hath *promised* it in the holy scriptures. (2.) That he is able to fulfil those promises. (3.) That he is *willing* to do so: and also to do it *now*. To this must be added one thing more; a divine evidence and conviction, that he *does* do it. This sanctification is wrought both *gradually* and *instantaneously*. God often destroys sin in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. Look for it, therefore, every moment. And should your expectation be disappointed, you lose nothing; you are only where you were. But you shall not be disappointed. There is an inseparable connexion between these three points; expect it by *faith*, expect

it *as you are*, and expect it *now*. To deny *one* of them is to deny them *all:* to allow one, is to allow them all."

I have been the more particular in exhibiting the ideas contained in the above sermon, as it was so much to the point, and shows so explicitly Mr. Wesley's views of the plan of salvation, and the general views of the Methodists. And it will also render it unnecessary for me to insert so much as otherwise I might have done, upon some other of the articles, seeing what is here said applies to several of them. I must repeat it, that the task I have undertaken, requires that I should exhibit the doctrines of Methodism just *as they are*, and this cannot be done in any way so well as by constantly appealing to Mr. Wesley's writings.

Privileges of Believers.

VI. The Methodists believe, that all who thus *repent* and *believe*, are, (1.) Justified and have peace with God; that we are accounted righteous, *only through* the sacrifice and intercession of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But although faith, receiving and resting upon Christ, is the sole instrument of justification; yet this faith in the justified person "worketh by love," and produces inward and outward holiness. They believe, (2.) That all persons who are thus justified, are adopted into the family of God; have a right to all the privileges of his children, and may come boldly to the throne of grace; receiving the Spirit of adoption, they are enabled to cry, Abba, Father; and, as his children, are loved, pitied, chastened, protected, and provided for; they are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ; and that continuing in this state they shall inherit all the promises, and obtain everlasting life. They believe also, (3.) That those who are thus justified and made children of God, are *assured* of this; and that this blessed assurance arises from "The Spirit of God bearing witness with their spirits that they are the children of God." They believe, that no person, under the gospel dispensation, is excluded from this privilege, except through unbelief, lukewarmness, the love of the world, or some other sin. To the enjoyment of this

most comfortable privilege, the Methodists believe there can be no exception, unless in some extraordinary cases, occasioned by extreme ignorance, the influence of bodily complaints, or the violence of temptation. But they believe, that every person possessed of this justification, adoption, and witness of the Spirit, hungers and thirsts after righteousness.

"The witness of the Spirit" is a subject Mr. Wesley has largely considered. Rom. viii. 16. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

"I. The witness or testimony of our own spirit. He desires all those who are for swallowing up the *testimony of the Spirit of God*, in the *rational testimony* of our own spirit, to observe, that in this text the apostle is so far from speaking of the testimony of our own spirit *only*, that it may be questioned whether he speaks of it at *all:* whether he does not speak *only* of the testimony of the Spirit of God. It does not appear but that the original may be fairly understood thus: the apostle had just said in the preceding verse, "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father," and immediately subjoins what may be translated, "The same Spirit beareth witness to our spirits that we are the children of God." The word denotes that he witnesses this *at the same time* he enables us to cry Abba, Father. But I contend not, seeing there are so many texts, with the experience of all real Christians, which sufficiently evince that there is in every believer, both the testimony of God's Spirit and the testimony of his own, that he is a child of God. With regard to the testimony of a Christian's *own* spirit, the foundation of this is laid in the numerous texts of scripture, which describe the marks of the children of God, and that very plainly.—And these are collected together and placed in the strongest light, by many, both ancient and modern writers. This may be still further aided by the ministry of the word, meditation, and religious conversation. And every man using the *understanding* which God has given him, and which religion was designed to improve, by applying those scripture marks to himself, may know whether he is a child of God. For instance, I

John ii. 3, 5, 29.—iii. 4, 19, 24.—iv. 13.—v. 18. Probably from the beginning of the world, none of the children of God were ever farther advanced in the grace of God, and the knowledge of Christ, than the apostle John, and those to whom he wrote at that time. Yet they did not despise these marks of being God's children; but applied them to their own souls, for the confirmation of their faith. Yet all this testimony is no other than rational; *the witness of our own spirit*, our reason or understanding. It all resolves into this; those who have these marks, they are God's children, but we have these marks; therefore we are his children. But how does it appear that we have these marks, that we love God and our neighbour, and that we keep God's commandments? The question does not mean, how does it appear to *others*, but to *ourselves*. As easily as you can know whether you are alive, in pain or in ease, may you know whether you are saved from proud wrath, and have the ease of a meek and quiet spirit; whether you love your neighbour as yourselves; whether you are kindly affectioned, gentle and long-suffering; whether you outwardly keep God's commandments by living godly, righteous and sober lives. This is properly the *testimony of our own spirit*. It is a consciousness of our having received, in and by the spirit of adoption, the tempers mentioned in the word of God as belonging to his adopted children.

"But what is the testimony of God's Spirit which is superadded to, and conjoined with this? how does he bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God? It is hard to find words in the language of men to explain *the deep things of God*. But, perhaps one might say, the testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God: that Jesus hath loved *me*, and given himself for *me*; that all *my* sins are blotted out, and *I*, even *I*, am reconciled to God.

"This *testimony of the Spirit of God* must, in the very nature of things, go before the testimony of our own spirit. We must be holy in heart and life, before we can be conscious that we are so. But we must love God before we can be holy at all; this being the root

of all holiness. Now we cannot love God, till we know he loves us. And we cannot know his pardoning love to us, till his Spirit witness it to our spirit. Since, therefore, this testimony of his Spirit must precede the love of God and all holiness, of consequence, it must precede our inward consciousness thereof, or the testimony of our own spirit concerning them. We may explain this matter a little farther.

"He that loves God, and delights and rejoices in him, with an humble joy, a holy delight, and an obedient love, is a child of God; but I thus love, delight, and rejoice in God: therefore I am a child of God: then a Christian cannot doubt of his being a child of God; of the former proposition he has as full assurance, as he has that the scriptures are of God; and of his thus loving God, he has an inward proof which is nothing short of self-evident.

"The *manner* how the divine testimony is manifested to the heart, I do not take upon me to explain, see John iii. 8. But we know the *fact*, namely, that the Spirit of God gives a believer such a testimony of his adoption, that while it is present to the soul, he can no more doubt the reality of his sonship, than he can doubt of the shining of the sun, while he stands in the full blaze of heaven. But,

"II. How may this joint testimony of God's Spirit and of our own spirit be clearly distinguished from presumption of mind, and the delusions of Satan? 1. To distinguish it from the presumption of a natural mind, (1.) The holy scriptures abound with marks, distinguishing the one from the other. They describe repentance, as constantly going before this witness of pardon, Matt. iii. 2. Mark i. 15. Acts ii. 38. Acts iii. 19. Again, (2.) The scriptures describe the being born of God, which must precede the witness that we are his children, as a change, no less than from darkness to light, as well as from the power of Satan unto God, Acts xxvi. 18. Col. i. 12. Eph. ii. 1—6. And, (3.) The scriptures describe the joy accompanying the witness of the Spirit, as tending to promote humility. In the presumptuous, deceived man, it is the contrary. Instead of being humble, meek, gentle, teachable, slow to

hear, and *slow to wrath*, he is haughty, assuming, slow to hear, and swift to speak, fiery, vehement, and eager in his conversation: yea, sometimes there is a fierceness in his air and manner of speaking, as well as his whole deportment, as if he were going to take the matter out of God's hands, and himself to *devour his adversaries*. (4.) The scriptures teach, *this is the love of God*, (the sure mark thereof) *that we keep his commandments*, see John xiv. 21. The genuine lover of God will do his will. But with the presumptuous pretender to the love of God, it is otherwise. He is not zealous, watchful over his tongue and heart, nor anxious to deny himself, or take up his cross. It follows from undeniable evidence, that he cannot have the true testimony of his own spirit. He cannot be conscious of having those marks which he has not, nor can the Spirit of God bear witness to a lie; or testify that he is a child of God, when he is manifestly a child of the devil.

"III. What is *the witness of the Spirit?* The original word may be rendered, either *the witness*, or (less ambiguously,) *the testimony*, or *the record*, 1 John v 11. I do not mean to say, that the Spirit of God testifies this by an outward voice; no, nor always by an inward voice, although he may do this sometimes. Neither do I suppose, that he always applies some scripture to the heart, though he often may do this. But he so works upon the soul, by his immediate influence, and by a strong, though inexplicable operation, that the stormy winds and troubled waves subside, and there is a sweet calm: the heart resting in the arms of Jesus, and the sinner being clearly satisfied, that God is reconciled, and that all his *iniquities are forgiven, and his sins covered.* That there is a testimony of the Spirit is acknowledged by all parties. And it is not questioned whether there is an *indirect* witness or testimony, that we are the children of God. This is nearly, if not exactly, the same with the testimony of a good conscience towards God. Nor do we assert, that there can be any real testimony of the Spirit, without the fruit of the Spirit. We assert on the contrary, that the fruit of the Spirit immediately springs from this testimony. But the point in question is, whether there be any *direct testimony* of the Spirit

at all? whether there be any other testimony of the Spirit than that which arises from a consciousness of the fruit. I believe there is.

"IV. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God." It is manifest that there are two witnesses mentioned; who together testify the same thing, the Spirit of God, and our own spirit. But what is the witness of the Spirit? See the verse before the text, and Gal. iv. 6. And experience agrees with the scripture testimonies. It has been confirmed by a *cloud* of living and dying *witnesses*. It is confirmed by the experience of many at the present day. And it is sanctioned by this additional consideration, that all those who are awakened out of the sleep of sin, cannot be satisfied with any thing short of the direct witness of God's Spirit that they are pardoned."

I have been the larger in this outline, because it is on a subject which distinguishes the Methodists.

Respecting "The fruits of the Spirit," Mr. Wesley's sentiments may be learnt from a sermon he preached before the University of Oxford, August 24, 1744, on Acts iv. 31. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." He says, whether the *extraordinary* gifts of the Holy Ghost, such as the *speaking with other tongues*, the *gifts of healing*, of *miracles*, *prophecy*, and of the *discernment of spirits*, were designed to remain in the church through all ages, and whether or no they will be restored at the nearer approach of the *restitution of all things*, are questions which it is not needful to decide. Even *then* they were divided with a sparing hand.—Were *all workers of miracles?* Had *all the gifts of healing; Did all speak with tongues?* No: perhaps not one in a thousand. None but teachers in the church, and only some of them. It was therefore for a more excellent purpose than this, that *they were* ALL *filled with the Holy Ghost.* It was to give them, (what none can deny to be essential to Christianity in all ages,) *the mind which was in Christ*, those holy *fruits of the Spirit*, which whosoever hath not *is none of his:* to fill them with *love*, *joy*, *peace*, *long-suffering*, *gentleness*, *goodness:* to endue them with *faith*, (perhaps it might be rendered, *fidelity*) with meekness and temperance, to enable

them to *crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts*, its passions and desires: and in consequence of that *inward change*, to fulfil all *outward* righteousness, to *walk as Christ also walked, in the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love.*

In another sermon by Mr. Wesley, on Rom, viii. 1. he inqures, Who are they that are in Christ Jesus? (1.) Those who believe in him; who have not on their own righteousness, but the righteousness which is by faith; who have redemption through the blood of Christ; who dwell in Christ, and have Christ to dwell in them; who are joined to the Lord in one spirit. Consequently, (2.) They *walk not after the flesh.* The flesh in the usual language of St. Paul, signifies corrupt nature, Gal. v. 16, 19. (3.) *Who are in Christ, who abide in him, and have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.* They abstain from the works of the flesh; from *adultery and fornication*, from *uncleanness and lasciviousness;* from *idolatry, witchcraft, hatred*, and *variance*, from *emulations, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings:* and from every design, word, and work, to which the corruption of nature leads. (4.) They now *walk after the Spirit*, both in their hearts and lives. They are taught by the Spirit to love God and their neighbour: and are led by him into every holy desire, and every holy and heavenly temper, till their hearts are purified from all unholiness. (5.) They who *walk after the Spirit*, are also led by him into all holiness of conversation. Their speech is *always in grace, seasoned with salt*, with the love and fear of God. No corrupt *communication comes out of their mouth, but* only *that which is good;* that which is to *the use of edifying*, which is *meet to minister grace unto the hearers.* They who indeed walk after the Spirit, (6.) show forth in the whole course of their lives the genuine fruits of the Spirit, namely, *love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance*, and whatsoever is lovely or of good report.—They "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things,"

The New Birth, Sanctification, and Good Works.

VII. The Methodists believe that the will of God is our sanctification, and that the design of Christ in our redemption is universal holiness. This section will include *The new birth*, *sanctification*, and *good works*.

1. The *new birth* is that *internal* change of heart which is produced in all those who are justified and adopted into the family of God. Justification is a *relative*, but this is a *real* change; justification is a change of *state*, but this is a change of *nature*. By justification the guilty is forgiven: but by regeneration *a new heart* is given to him, and he becomes a *new creature* in Christ Jesus. This change extends to all the powers of the soul, illuminating the understanding, subjecting the will to the will of God, regulating the passions, and sanctifying the affections. In short, the person who experiences this change is properly termed in scripture A NEW MAN, in consequence of his being "born again" and "*walking in newness of life*." And as God is the author of this important change, and effects it by his Holy Spirit, the regenerate are said in scripture to be *born of God*, and *born of the Spirit*. And inasmuch as the *Word of God* and *faith* therein are the instrumental causes of it, the regenerate are described as "born again of incorruptible seed by the word of God," as "the children of God by *faith* in Christ Jesus." Since the baptism of water is at least an emblem, and sometimes a mean of those divine influences whereby this change is produced, believers are said to be *born of water* as well as *of the Spirit*, and to be *saved by the washing of regeneration*, as well as *by the renewing of the Holy Ghost*.

The *substance* of Mr. Wesley's sermon on "*The New Birth*," very properly comes in here. The text is, John iii. 7. "*Ye must be born again*." He makes three principal inquiries, *i. e.*

1. *Why* must we be born again? Why, because, 1. Though man was made in the image of God, he was not made immutable. This would have been inconsistent with that state of trial in which God was pleased to place him. He was created with an ability to stand,

and yet liable to fall. 2. From this high and holy state he fell. He *eat of the tree whereof the Lord had commanded, Thou shalt not eat thereof.* By this act of disobedience, he openly declared he would no longer have God to rule over him, but that he would be governed by his own will. God had told him *In the day thou eatest* of that fruit *thou shalt surely die.* Accordingly, in that day he died to God, losing the life of God, and was separated from him, in union with whom his spiritual life consisted. The body dies when it is separated from the soul: the soul dies when it is separated from God. But this separation *Adam* sustained in the day, the hour he eat of the forbidden fruit. And of this he gave immediate proof. The love of God was gone, and servile fear succeeded it. He fled from the presence of the Lord. And so little knowledge of God did he retain, that he imagined he could hide himself from him who fills heaven and earth, among the trees of the garden. So had he lost both the knowledge and the love of God, without which the image of God could not subsist. Of this, therefore, he was deprived at the same time, and became unholy as well as unhappy. In the room of this he sunk into pride and self-will, the very image of the devil, and into sensual appetites and desires, the image of the beasts that perish. The death that God threatened Adam with, could not so properly be the death of the body, for he did not *die that day*, but lived above nine hundred years after. It must be understood of spiritual death, the loss of the life and image of God. And *in Adam all died*, all the children of men who were then in *Adam's* loins. The natural consequence is, that every one descended from him, comes into the world spiritually dead, dead to God, wholly *dead in sin:* void of all the life and image of God. Instead of the righteousness and true holiness, wherein Adam was created, every man born into the world bears the image of the devil, in pride and self-will, the image of the beast, in sensual appetites and desires. This entire corruption of human nature then is the foundation of the new birth.

II. What is the *nature* of the *new birth?* We are not to expect any minute, philosophical account of the

manner of this. This our Saviour told Nicodemus, when he said, "*The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, neither whither it goeth.*" Thou art absolutely assured, beyond all doubt, that it doth blow; but the precise manner how it begins and ends, rises and falls, no man can tell. *So is every one that is born of the Spirit.* Thou mayest be as absolutely assured of the fact, as of the blowing of the wind; but the precise manner how it is done, how the Holy Spirit works this in the soul, neither thou nor the wisest of the children of men are able to explain.

The expression being *born again*, was not first used by our Lord. It was in common use among the Jews at that time. When an adult Heathen was convinced that the Jewish religion was of God, and wanted to join therein, it was the custom to baptize him first, before he was admitted to circumcision. And when he was baptized, he was said to be *born again:* by which they meant, that he, who was before a child of the devil, was now adopted into the family of God, and accounted one of his children. A man's being spiritually *born again*, bears a near analogy to the natural birth. Before a child is born it has eyes, but does not see: and ears, but it does not hear. It has a very imperfect use of any other sense. It has no knowledge of any thing, nor any understanding. To *that* existence we do not even give the name of life. It is only when a child is born that it begins to live. He then begins to see the light, and the various objects which surround him. His ears are opened, and he hears sounds. And all the other senses begin to be exercised upon their proper objects. And he breathes and lives in a manner very different from what he did before. In like manner, before a man is born of God, he has eyes, but in a spiritual sense, does not see. Hence he has no knowledge of God, or the things of God, either of spiritual or eternal things. But, when he is born of God, *the eyes of his understanding are opened.* He sees *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.* His ears are now opened, and he hears the voice of God. He is conscious of a peace that passeth understanding, and

feels a joy unspeakable and full of glory. He feels the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him. And all his spiritual senses are exercised to discern spiritual good and evil. Now he may be properly said *to live:* God having quickened him by his Spirit, he is alive to God through Jesus Christ. He lives a life which is hid with Christ in God; God breathes grace into the soul, and the soul breathes prayer and praise to God; and he thus grows up, till he comes to *the fulness of the stature of Christ.* This is the *nature* of the new birth.

III. To what *ends* is it necessary that we should be *born again?* It is necessary, 1. In order to holiness. Gospel-holiness is no less than the image of God stamped upon the heart. But this cannot be in the soul, till we are born again. The new-birth, therefore, is necessary in order to holiness. But, 2. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;* without this, no man shall see the face of God in glory. Of consequence, the new birth is absolutely necessary in order to obtain eternal salvation. 3. Except a man be *born again*, he cannot be happy even in this world. It is not possible that a man should be happy without being holy.—All unholy tempers are uneasy tempers. Not only malice, hatred, envy, jealousy and revenge, create a present hell in the breast, but even the softer passions, if not kept within due bounds, give a thousand times more pain than pleasure. All those general sources of sin, pride, self-will, and idolatry, are in the same proportion as they prevail, general sources of misery.—Therefore as long as any of these reign in any soul, happiness has no place there. But they must reign, till our nature is changed by being born again. Consequently, the new birth is necessary in order to happiness in this world, as well as in the world to come.

IV. I will subjoin a few natural inferences. 1. It follows, that baptism is not the new birth; these are not, as many suppose, one and the same thing. Many speak as if they thought so, though I do not know that any denomination of Christians publicly avow it. 2. The new birth does not *always* accompany baptism. A man may possibly be *born of water*, and yet not be

born of the spirit. The tree is known by its fruits. And in many instances, we know that adult persons have been baptized, and as they were the children of the devil before, so they continued so afterwards. 3. The new birth is not the same as sanctification. It is a part of sanctification, but not the whole; it is the gate of it, and the entrance into it. Our inward and outward holiness then begins. And we must *grow up into him who is our head.* See the exactness of the analogy. A child is born in a moment, at least in a short time. But he gradually grows up in manhood. So a child of God is born in a short time, and grows to spiritual maturity. 4. *You must be born again*, though you have been baptized, or not baptized, otherwise you cannot be holy: though ever so harmless; though you do good, and attend public worship ever so constantly.

2. *Sanctification* as distinguished from the *new birth*, is the progress and completion of that divine change which is begun in regeneration. It includes, not only a *separation from*, or *deadness to* the world and sin, a *dedication* and *consecration* of the whole man, spirit, soul, and body, to God and his service, but is also a *conformity to his image*, and a *participation of the divine nature.* The *causes* and *means* of this sanctification, are the same with those by which the new-birth is produced: The "God of peace himself sanctifies us," by giving us his holy and sanctifying Spirit. His word of truth is one principal instrument in effecting this good work, and our faith and obedience is another. He *sanctifies us by his truth, purifies our hearts by faith*, while *we purify our souls by obeying the truth.* And as all this is through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, "our old man" is said to be "crucified with him," we are "crucified to the world, and the world to us," and are "sanctified unto God by his blood," till we at last receive an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith that is in him."—Let me add, the Methodists believe, we may love God with all our hearts, and be delivered from the hands of all our spiritual enemies so completely, that we may serve God without fear, in righteousness and holiness all the days of our life; yea, that we may rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks.

It will be impossible to do justice to the subject of sanctification, without once more having recourse to Mr. Wesley's sermons, especially as the Methodists are particularly distinguished upon this point. One sermon of his, on Rom. ii. 29. is entitled, "*The Circumcision of the Heart.*" He inquires, wherein does this circumcision *consist?* 1. In general, it is an habitual, holy disposition of soul, which implies, being cleansed from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit; having the mind that was in Christ; and the image of God. 2. More particularly, it implies humility, faith, hope, and charity. Those who have this circumcision of heart, will love God and their brother also.

There is another sermon of his, on Phil. iii. 12. entitled, "*Christian Perfection.*" In this he endeavours to show,

I. In what sense Christians are *not* perfect. 1. They are *not perfect* in *knowledge.* They know many things; but there are many others which they do not know.—They cannot fully comprehend how God is one in three and three in one; how Jesus took upon himself the form of a servant; they know not the times and seasons when God will work his great works upon earth; much less when "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." In many respects, they know not the reasons of God's dispensations to many of the children of men. 2. No one is so perfect in this life as to be free from ignorance, or from sometimes making mistakes. The children of God do not mistake as to the things essential to salvation. But in matters unessential they err frequently. They may mistake as to *facts* themselves, believing a thing to have been or not to have been, when the fact has been the reverse. Or, they may be mistaken as to *circumstances* belonging to *facts.* Nay, even respecting the holy scriptures, good men may, and often do, make mistakes, especially with regard to those parts which do not immediately relate to practice. 3. Christians are not so perfect as to be free from infirmities. I do not mean sins. But, not only such as are truly *bodily infirmities*, but all such infirmities, outward or inward,

as are not of a moral nature: slowness of understanding, dulness or confusedness of apprehension, incoherency of thought, or irregular quickness or heaviness of imagination; or a bad memory. Such are those which partly flow from these, namely, slowness or impropriety of speech; and a thousand nameless defects, either in conversation or behaviour. 4. Nor can we expect to be wholly free from temptation while in this life. It may be so for a time; but temptation will return. Even the Son of God himself was tempted, and that to the end of his life. But,

II. In what *are* Christians perfect? But observe, there are several stages in the Christian life; some are new-born babes, while others have attained to greater maturity. See 1 John ii. 12, &c. I speak at present chiefly to fathers in Christ. 1. All real Christians are so perfect as not to live in outward sin. Rom. vi. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 11, 14, 18. 1 Pet. iv. 1, 2. 1 John iii. 8, 18. "He that committeth sin is of the devil." And *this* privilege is common to *all* Christians. But, 2. Those who have overcome the wicked one, and are strong in the Lord, are free from *sinful thoughts*. But a thought concerning sin, and a sinful thought, are widely different. A man may think of a murder, which another has committed, and yet this is no sinful thought. 3. They are free from sinful tempers. 1 John iii. 3.—Thus does God circumcise the hearts of his people, according to his promise. Deut. xxx. 6. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, &c. *Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved brethren*, "let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

3. *Good works*, are only such works as God has commanded in his holy word, and not such as without any authority or countenance from the scripture, are devised by men out of blind zeal, or on a pretence of good intention. These good works done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith, insomuch that a true and lively faith may be as evidently known by them as a tree is discerned by its fruits. By these true Christians manifest their thankfulness, increase their confidence, edify their brethren, adorn their profession, stop the mouths of ad-

versaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, "created in Christ Jesus, unto these good works." But, be it remembered, that works of man's devising, or works done *besides*, or *over*, and *above* God's commandments, which the papists call *Works of Supererogation*, cannot be taught without impiety and arrogance. By these men seem to declare, that they not only do their duty, but that they do more than they are required to do. Whereas our Saviour positively says, "When you have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants." Our good works can neither profit God, nor make any satisfaction for our former sins. Nevertheless, the good works of true believers, being wrought through his Spirit, will be accepted through him, and find a gracious and abundant reward.

The Bible the only Rule of Faith and Practice.

VIII. The Methodists believe, that in all the foregoing articles, they have drawn their opinions from the *word of God*, which they have declared to be "The only and sufficient rule, both of their faith and practice." They believe, that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not found therein, or cannot be proved thereby, ought not to be imposed upon any man as an article of faith, nor be thought necessary to salvation. By the *word of God*, or *holy scriptures*, the Methodists understand those divinely inspired canonical books of the Old and New Testament, the authority of which has been acknowledged by the church of God in all ages. The names of these books are, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the first and second Books of Samuel, the first and second Books of Kings, the first and second Books of Chronicles, the Book of Ezra, the Book of Nehemiah, the Book of Esther, the Book of Job, the Psalms, the Proverbs of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher, the Canticles, or Song of Solomon, the four greater, and the twelve lesser Prophets; and all the Books of the New Testament, as commonly printed and received. They believe that

all and each of these several parts of the sacred volume, were written by the men to whom they are ascribed, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God. The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; but in both these Testaments, life everlasting is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man. For although the law given by Moses, as touching ceremonies, is not binding upon Christians; yet all Christians ought to obey those commandments which are called moral.

Sundry Controverted Doctrines.

IX. The Methodists believe, touching sundry points of doctrine, which have been much controverted in the church of Christ as follows:—That is to say,

1. They do not admit the doctrines of absolute, unconditional election and reprobation, but believe them to be unscriptural; forasmuch as God hath declared in his word, that he is "loving to every man," and "his tender mercies are over all his works:" that "he willeth not the death of a sinner," is "not willing that any should perish; but that all should come to repentance;" and that "he willeth all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." They believe that what is termed predestination, is *conditional*, and founded on God's foreknowledge, according to what is said by the apostles Paul and Peter; the former of whom says, "Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate:" i. e. *define* or *describe before hand*, to be conformed to the image of his Son:" that is, those whom he foreknew as repenting of sin, and as believing on the Messiah, he did *describe* in the writings of the ancient prophets, as persons who should resemble him, whose disciples they should be; and that both in heart and life, as well drinking into his spirit, as copying his example. Thus with regard to election; as God *chooses* or *elects* men "to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, to which he calls them by the gospel;" so those whom he foreknows as obeying this call, are termed by Peter, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the

Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." That all who are called even by the gospel, do not obey this call, or do not persevere so to do, is certain, because our Lord assures us, *Many are called*, both to the marriage feast, provided in the gospel, and to work in the vineyard, and *few chosen*. It is, therefore, the duty of all believers, even of such as have *precious faith*, (2 Pet. i. 10, 11.) to make their calling and election sure, by adding to their faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and charity. On the other hand, those who do not do this, and therefore lack these graces, are the real reprobates, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. and if nevertheless, they think themselves God's elect, "are blind, and cannot see afar off;" while those in whom these graces *are*, and with whom they continue and "abound, shall never fall: but an entrance shall be ministered unto them into God's eternal kingdom."

In a pamphlet, entitled "Serious considerations on Absolute Predestination," published by Mr. Wesley, are the following observations:—

1. God delighteth not in the death of a sinner, but that all should live and be saved, and hath given his Son, that all who believe on him should be saved. He is the true light which lighteth every man which cometh into the world. And this light would work out the salvation of all, if not resisted.

2. But some assert, that God by an eternal and unchangeable decree, hath predestinated to eternal damnation the far greater part of mankind, and that absolutely, without any regard to their works, but only for the showing the glory of his justice; and that for the bringing this about, he hath appointed miserable souls necessarily to walk in their wicked ways, that so his justice may lay hold on them, &c. &c.

3. This doctrine is novel. In the first four hundred years after Christ, no mention is made of it by any writer, great or small, in any part of the Christian church. The foundations of it were laid in the latter writings of Augustine, when unguardedly writing against Pelagius. It was afterwards taught by Dominicus, a popish friar,

and the monks of his order, and at last, it was unhappily taken up by John Calvin. This doctrine, is, First, injurious to God, because it makes him the author of all sin. Secondly, It is injurious to God, because it represents him as delighting in the death of sinners, expressly contrary to his own declaration, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. 1 Tim. ii. 4. Thirdly, This doctrine is highly injurious to Christ, our mediator, and to the efficacy and excellency of his gospel. It supposes his mediation to be necessarily of no effect with regard to the greater part of mankind. Fourthly, The preaching of the gospel is a mere mockery and delusion, if many of those to whom it is preached, are by an irrevocable decree shut out from being benefited by it. Fifthly, this doctrine makes the coming of Christ, and his sacrifice upon the cross, instead of being a fruit of God's love to the world, to be one of the severest acts of God's indignation against mankind: it being only ordained (according to this doctrine) to save a very few, and for the hardening and increasing the damnation of the far greater number of mankind: namely, all those who do not believe: and the cause of this unbelief, according to this doctrine, is the council and decree of God. Sixthly, This doctrine is highly injurious to mankind; for it puts them in a far worse condition than the devils in hell. For these were some time in a capacity to have stood.—They might have kept their happy estate, but would not. Whereas, according to this doctrine, many millions of men are tormented for ever, who never were happy, never could be, and never can be. Again, devils will not be punished for neglecting a great salvation; but human creatures will. In direct opposition to this, we affirm, that God willeth all to be saved; and hath given his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might be saved. There is hardly any other article of the Christian faith, so frequently, plainly, and positively asserted. It is that which makes the preaching of the gospel "Glad tidings to all," Luke ii. 10. Otherwise, had this salvation been absolutely confined to a few, it had been "Sad tidings of great sorrow to most people." Read Col. i. 28. 1 Tim. ii. 1—6. Heb. ii. 9. John iii. 17.—xii. 47. 2 Pet. ii.

3, 9. Ezek. xxxiii. 11. 1 John ii. 1, 2. Ps. xvii. 14. Isa. xiii. 11. Matt. xviii. 7. John vii. 7.—viii. 26.—xii. 19.—xiv. 17.—xv. 18, 19.—xviii. 20. 1 Cor. i. 21.—ii. 12.—vi. 2. Gal. vi. 14. James i. 27. 2 Pet. ii. 20. 1 John ii. 15. iii. 1.—iv. 4, 5.

Any one who desires further information upon this subject, may read, "Predestination calmly considered," and the "Scripture Doctrine of Election and Reprobation," by Mr. Wesley, together with Mr. Fletcher's "Checks to Antinomianism," where this subject is treated with the pen of a scribe well instructed.

2. They believe the doctrine of *general redemption*, to be as explicitly declared in the holy scriptures, as that of God's universal love. For as "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life;" as "he sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved;" so we are expressly assured, "that Christ is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe:" that "he gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time;" that "when all were dead, he died for all;" and "by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." We are persuaded, therefore, with John, that he is the propitiation, not for our sins only," (the sins of such as now believe, have believed, or shall believe hereafter,) "but for the sins of the whole world," not excluding even such as finally perish. For as Peter speaks of some, as "denying the Lord that bought them and bringing on themselves swift destruction:" so Paul signifies, that we may "destroy with our meat," or with an improper use of our Christian liberty, "those for whom Christ died:" and thus "the weak brother for whom Christ died, being made to stumble and fall, may "perish."

3. The Methodists believe, That even the regenerate may and often do fall from grace both totally and finally. The apostle Paul mentions some who, having "put away faith and a good conscience, concerning faith had made shipwreck," and expressly mentions Hymeneus, Philetus, and Alexander, of that number, 1 Tim. 20. 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18. The author of the Epis-

tle to the Hebrews also assures us, that even such as have been "enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gift, been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, may so fall away, as that it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, seeing that they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to open shame." Or, as he expresses himself in the tenth chapter of the same Epistle, "sinning wilfully after they had received the knowledge of the truth; they trample under foot the Son of God, count the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy" or a common "thing, and do despite to the spirit of his grace." We are, therefore, obliged to believe, with Ezekiel, that even "The righteous man may turn away from his righteousness, commit iniquity, and die therein." With the apostle Paul, that the *just*, or *righteous* man, that *lives by faith*, may *draw back*, even into *perdition;* that those who actually *stand* by *faith*, and therefore share in the divine goodness, through not *continuing in his goodness may be cut off*, and that finally and for ever: and with our Lord and Saviour, that those who are really branches in him, in consequence of their not still continuing to *abide in him*, may be *cast forth* as withered branches, and may be *gathered*, and *cast into the fire and burned.* It appears, therefore, to us, to be needful to caution all believers, in the language of the apostle, "Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall." The Methodists agree with their own poet, who says:—

"The holiest who their watch remit,
May sink into the tempter's snare;
Will fall into the hellish pit,
Unless with humble, ceaseless prayer,
They to the last themselves deny,
And conquerors in the harness die."

In a pamphlet written by Mr. Wesley, and entitled, "Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance, of the Saints," are the following observations:—

1. By the SAINTS, I understand those who are holy or righteous in the Judgment of God himself: those who are endued with the faith that purifies the heart, and

produces a good conscience: those that are grafted into the good olive-tree, the spiritual, invisible church; those who are branches of the true vine, of whom Christ says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches:" those who so effectually know Christ, as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world; those who see the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of the witness and fruits of the Spirit: those who live by faith in the Son of God: those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant: those to whom all, or any of these characters belong, I mean by the term SAINTS.—But,

2. Can any of these fall away? By *falling away*, we mean, not barely falling into sin. This it is granted they may. But can they fall *totally?* Can any of these so fall from God as to perish everlastingly? Either side of this question is attended with great difficulties; such as reason alone could never remove. But to the law and to the testimony. On this authority, I believe a SAINT may fall away; that one that is holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself, may nevertheless so fall from God, as to perish everlastingly. "When the righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die." Ezek. xviii. 24. That this is to be understood of eternal death, appears from the 26th verse: "When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them, (here is temporal death) for his iniquity that he hath done, he shall die:" (here is death eternal.) It appears farther, from the whole scope of the chapter, which is to prove, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." ver. 4. If you say, "The soul here means the body," I answer, that will die whether you sin or not. Again, "When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness," (yea, or to that promise as absolute and unconditional) "and committeth iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed shall he die." Ezek. xxxiii. 13. and ver. 18. "When

the righteous turneth from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby." But how does this agree with Psalm lxxxix. 31—34. "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, I will visit their offences with the rod, and their sin with scourges. Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my truth to fail," &c. There is no inconsistency between this declaration and the declarations which we have just quoted from Ezekiel. The prophet declares the just judgment of God against every righteous man who falls from his righteousness. The psalmist declares, "the loving-kindness which God sware unto David in his truth."—Read the whole psalm from verse 21. The covenant here spoken of, relates wholly to David and his seed or children. And even this covenant is not absolute, but conditional. The condition of repentance, in case of forsaking God's law, was implied, though not expressed. And this condition not being performed, God did also fail David, and did alter the thing that had gone out of his lips. He "abhorred and forsook his anointed, the seed of David, whose throne (if they had repented) should have been as the days of heaven."—ver. 37, 38. Well, but Jeremiah, as God's mouth, says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love," &c.—These words simply declare God's love to the Jewish church. To be convinced of this, read the whole passage, Jer. xxxi. 1—4. Let me observe, once for all, a fallacy that is almost constantly used by almost all writers in favour of final perseverance. They apply assertions or prophecies to particular persons, which relate only to the church in general, and some only to the Jewish church and nation, as distinguished from all other people.

3. A *Saint* may fall from God. The apostle Paul asserts (1 Tim. i. 19.) that "concerning faith" some "have made shipwreck." They had enjoyed faith, or they could not have "put it away." Their loss of faith was a wreck: a total wreck and final loss: for a ship once wrecked is never a ship again, but is totally and finally lost. But, you say, "He that believeth shall be saved." But, this scripture does not mean, that eve-

ry man who *now* has faith, shall *certainly* and *inevitably* obtain eternal salvation. If so, then by all the rules of speech the other part of the sentence must mean, "he that believeth not" at this moment, shall *certainly* and *inevitably* "*be damned.*" The genuine meaning is, "He that believeth," if he continue to believe, "shall be saved:" but "he that believeth not," and continues *not* to believe, "*shall be damned.*" It is true, as you say, that Christ says, John iii. 36, and John vi. 24, that "he that believeth hath everlasting life; I answer, (1.) The love of God is everlasting life; it is the life of heaven. Every believer loves God; and therefore has everlasting life." (2.) Every one that believes is therefore passed from death unto life, from spiritual death unto spiritual life: and (3.) "Shall not come into condemnation," if he continue in the faith unto the end, John viii. 51.

Those who are grafted into the good olive tree, the spiritual invisible church, may, nevertheless, so fall from God as to perish everlastingly. "Some of the branches *are* broken off," says Paul, Rom. xi. 20, 21, 22. The olive-tree is not barely the visible, but the invisible church. But, you say, the 29th vere says, "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." The preceding verse shows, that we are to understand this of the unconditional election of the Jewish nation; that God did not repent of the blessings he had given them; and that God has still blessings in store for the seed of Abraham. See Num. xxiii. 19. Nor does this militate against the *unchangeableness* of God. Rather, it shows him to be unchangeably holy, always loving righteousness, and hating iniquity; and unchangeably just.—Nay, it does not prove any thing against God's *faithfulness.* He fulfils every promise to those whom he made it to, namely, those who fulfil the condition of the promise: particularly that promise, 1 Cor. x. 13.—"God is faithful in that he will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able to bear." "Faithful to establish and keep you from evil," Thes. v. 19. Faithful to confirm you unto the end. 1 Cor. i. 8, 9. But you say, no condition is either expressed or implied, where Paul speaks of being fully persuaded that "No-

thing would separate him from the love of God in Christ Jesus." This assertion will bear a dispute. But were it just as you say, it only proves that the apostle was at *that time* fully persuaded of his own perseverance. And I doubt not but many believers at this day, have the very same assurance, termed in scripture, the *full assurance of hope.*

Our Lord speaks of some of *the branches* as *not abiding* in him, but being *broken off*, *withered*, and *burnt*. And after being *cast into the fire* and *burnt*, there could be no possibility of grafting them in again.

Mr. Wesley argues in a similar way respecting other scriptures which are supposed to favour the doctrine of absolute final perseverance. The pamphlet is but small, yet contains much dispassionate and close argument.

4. They believe, that though many continue in impenitence and unbelief, and so perish eternally, it is not to be attributed to God's having unconditionally predestinated them to eternal death, or to his withholding from them his saving grace; but to their own *free*, *unnecessitated*, and *avoidable* rejection or abuse of that grace. For although there may be a difference as to the *means* and *opportunities* of obtaining faith and salvation, offered to different nations and conditions of mankind; yet does God bestow as much light and grace on all, as is sufficient to make them acquainted with himself, and with his will concerning them, and to enable them to worship and serve him acceptably, according to the dispensation under which they are. With respect to those to whom the holy scriptures and the gospel of his grace are committed, he affords them grace sufficient to enable them to improve these advantages to his glory and their own salvation. That is to say, he gives them grace sufficient to beget in them *repentance unto life*, and *saving faith*, and to carry on his good work in them to the end. Not only those, therefore, who actually *repent*, *believe* and are *converted*, but those also who remain *impenitent and unbelieving*, have that grace afforded them whereby they *might* comply with these conditions of salvation. For those whom God calls to repentance and faith, he calls in *good earnest*, and not merely in *show* and *pretence*, as well by his word and the dispen-

sation of his providence, as by his inward grace, with a good will and sincere intention to convert and save them. So that those who continue in sin, perish through the abuse of their own free will, like the Jews, "love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil;" resist the Holy Ghost; "judge themselves unworthy of eternal life;" reject, "and thereby make void the counsel of God against themselves:" close their eyes against the divine light, harden their hearts against the fear and love of God, and "will not come to Christ that they might have life," lest, says our Lord, "they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and be converted and healed."

The Covenant of Grace.

X. The Methodist believe, that the covenant of grace has been administered in different ages of the world. In the patriarchal ages it was administered by *promises*, *prophecies*, *sacrifices*, and at last by *circumcision*. Under the Mosaic dispensation, generally termed *the law*, were exhibited in the paschal lamb, the scape-goat, the priesthood of Aaron, and a variety of sacrifices, oblations, and ablutions, and in types and shadows, the Messiah to come, and the privileges and blessings of the new covenant. These institutions were, for that time, sufficient and efficacious, through the operation of the Spirit, to instruct and build up the church of God in faith in the promised Messiah, by whom the true members thereof had full remission of sins, and eternal salvation. This is called the Old Testament.

Under the gospel, Christ the substance, prefigured by these shadows being exhibited, the ordinances, in and by which this covenant is dispensed, are *the preaching of the word*, and the administration of the sacraments of *baptism* and the *Lord's Supper:* which ordinances, though fewer in number, and administered with more simplicity, and less external glory, yet hold forth this covenant in greater fulness, evidence, and spiritual efficacy to all nations, both Jews and Gentiles. This is called the New Testament. There are not, there-

fore, two covenants of Grace, differing in substance, but one and the same under various dispensations.

Under this covenant of grace, and in all the dispensations thereof, the Lord Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man; the *prophet*, *priest*, and *king*, the *head* and *saviour* of his church, the *heir of all things*, and *judge of the world*. It *pleased the Father that in Him all fulness should dwell*, that being *full of grace and truth*, he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a mediator and surety, which office he took not upon himself, but was called thereto by the Father, who committed all power and judgment into his hands, and gave him commandment to execute the same. This office he willingly undertook, and in order to the proper discharge of it, was *made under the law*, which he perfectly fulfilled; endured most grievous anguish in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body; was crucified, and died; was buried, and remained under the power of death till the third day, yet saw no corruption. He then rose from the dead with the same body in which he suffered! with which also, rendered spiritual and glorious, he ascended into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of the Father, making intercession, and at the end of the world, shall come again to judge the quick and the dead, the great and the small of all nations.

By his perfect obedience and the sacrifice of himself, once offered to God, through the eternal Spirit, he hath fully satisfied the demands of divine justice, affronted by the sins of man, and hath procured, not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all that truly repent, believe in him, and are faithful unto death.

It is necessary to observe also, that although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ till after his incarnation, yet the virtue, efficacy, and the benefits thereof were communicated unto penitent believing souls, in all ages, successively from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices by which he was revealed and signified to be the "seed of the woman which should bruise the serpent's head, and "the Lamb slain from the foundation

of the world;" being "the same yesterday, to-day and for ever." Nor were the devout heathens who feared God and wrought righteousness, excluded from an interest in his mediation, though they were unacquainted with his name, he being the Saviour of all men that are saved, but especially of those who explicitly believe in him.

Marriage.—Loyalty.—The Sabbath.—The visible Church.—Baptism, and the Lord's Supper.

XI. Touching sundry other matters.

1. Respecting marriage, the Methodists believe it to be between *one man and one woman*, and that it was ordained for the mutual help of both parties, and for the legitimate and regular increase of mankind; that it is lawful and honourable; but that it is not lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time. And Christians ought to marry *only in the Lord*, and therefore should not be united in wedlock with *Infidels*, *Jews*, *Mahometans*, *Heathens*. Neither should a true Christian marry a person who is only a Christian in name, but should take care if he or she do marry, not to be unequally yoked together with such as do not believe in, fear, worship, and serve God.

2. The Methodists believe, that God, the supreme Lord and King of the whole world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be, under him, over the people, for his own glory, and the public good: and that they should be for the punishment of evil doers, and for the praise of them that do well. Hence, it is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of magistrates, when duly called thereto. And it is the duty of the people to pray for their rulers, and all magistrates, superior and subordinate, to honour their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority for conscience sake.

They believe also, that the King hath the chief power in the united kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and his other dominions, unto whom the chief government of this empire appertains: and is not, nor ought to be, subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

3. They believe it to be their duty to keep the first day of the week as a sabbath. This before Christ, was on the last day of the week; but from the time of his resurrection, was changed into the first day of the week, and is in scripture called "*The Lord's day*," and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian sabbath. This they believe to be set apart by God, and for his worship, by a *positive*, *moral*, and *perpetual* commandment. And they think it to be agreeable to the law of nature, as well as divine institution, that a due proportion of time should be set apart for the worship of God. And, perhaps, no proportion could have been so proper as that of one day out of seven.—Less might have been too little, and more might have been more than could have been spared from other employments.

This day ought to be kept holy unto the Lord, and men and women ought so to order their affairs, and prepare their hearts, and they may not only have a holy rest on that day from worldly employments, words, and thoughts, but spend the day in the public and private duties of piety. No part of the day should be employed in any other way, except in works of mercy and necessity. On this day, they believe it to be their duty to worship God, and that not only in form, but at the same tame in spirit and in truth. Therefore, they employ themselves in prayer and thanksgiving, in reading and meditating on the scriptures, in hearing the public preaching of God's word, in singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, in Christian conversation, and in commemorating the dying love of the Lord Jesus Christ. And they believe, that no part of religious worship, under the gospel, is confined to, or made more acceptable by, any particular place in which it may be performed, whether built and set apart for worship or otherwise.—And with them it is a prevailing idea, that God must be worshipped in *spirit*, daily, in private families, in the closet, and in the public assemblies.

4. They believe *The visible Church of Christ* to consist of a number of believing and obedient people, among whom the word of God is preached in purity, and who walk, not only in the commands, but in all

the ordinances of Christ; that the church is not confined to one nation, as under the law, but is universal, and will continue and increase to the end of the world.

5. They believe baptism to be an ordinance appointed by Christ; not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be to him a sign or emblem of regeneration, and of his presenting himself to God, through Jesus Christ, to *walk in newness of life.* It is also a covenant of grace, and by Christ's own appointment, is to continue in the church to the end of the world. The person is to be baptized in water, by a Christian minister, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And baptism may be rightly administered, either by immersion, or by pouring, or sprinkling water upon the person. This ordinance of baptism ought to be administered, not only to adult believers, but to all infants whose fathers or mothers are true Christians. But because proselyting was enjoined as previous to baptism, in our Saviour's charge to his apostles, when he sent them out to Christianize the world, some have inferred that infants are not to be baptized. But if the argument was as strong as they supposed it to be, it would follow, that infants cannot be saved: for it is declared, "he that believeth not shall be damned." But, the truth is, that both Mark xvi. 15. and Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, must be interpreted according to the subjects treated of in them, which are plainly adult persons: and therefore no argument can be drawn thence concerning either the baptism or salvation of infants.—They who conclude that infants are not capable of baptism, because they cannot believe, must conclude also that they cannot be saved; faith being more expressly required to salvation than baptism. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" but though he says, "he that believeth not shall be damned," he does not say, "He that is *not* baptized shall be damned." Baptism is the same under the Christian dispensation, that circumcision was under the dispensation of Moses: and all the arguments against infant baptism would have been equally conclusive against infant circumcision. Circumcision was a sign and seal of a cove-

nant entered into with God: and baptism is intended to be the same. Yet, though baptism ought not to be neglected, grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto, or connected with it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all who are baptized are certainly regenerated. Lastly, This ordinance is to be administered only once to any one person.

6. In the same night that Jesus was betrayed, he instituted the ordinance termed "*The Lord's Supper*," or the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ. This he ordered his followers to do in remembrance of him. The Methodists believe that it ought to be observed by the church to the end of the world, in remembrance of his sacrifice of himself in his death and passion, for the spiritual benefit of believers; to engage them more strongly to love and serve him; as a bond of union among themselves; and as a sign of their mutual trust in and love to Christ; and of their mutual hope of being with him hereafter. "Is it not the communion of the body and blood of Christ?" All true Christians have fellowship with him, especially in this ordinance, as to his grace, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory; and being united with each other in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as conduce to their mutual good, whether in matters temporal or spiritual. They are bound, especially, to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and all such spiritual exercises as tend to their mutual edification. And they ought to help one another in temporal things according to their several necessities and abilities, which communion as far as we have opportunity, is to be extended to "all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus." But this communion, notwithstanding, which the saints have with each other, doth not take away or infringe the title or propriety which each man hath in his goods or possessions.

State of separate Spirits.—Day of Judgment.—Hell and Heaven.

XII. The Methodists believe in a state of separate spirits after death, a general resurrection, a day of judgment, and a state of eternal happiness and eternal misery.

1. They believe in a state of separate spirits. The bodies of men, after death, return to dust and see corruption; but their souls neither *die* nor *sleep*, but have an immortal subsistence, and immediately "return to God who gave them." The souls of the righteous, being made perfect, are received into paradise, where they are with Christ in unspeakable felicity, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. The souls of the wicked, immediately after the death of their bodies, lift up their eyes in hell, being in torments, Luke xvi. 23. to be reserved to the day of judgment.

2. The Methodists believe hell to be a dark bottomless pit, full of fire and brimstone; that the wicked will spend their time there in weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; that every part of both body and soul will be tormented at once: that their bodies will be tormented by lying and burning in flaming fire; that their souls will be tormented by a sense of the wrath of God; by pride, self-will, malice, and envy; by grief, desire, fear, rage, and despair; that their tormentors will be their own consciences, the devils and one another; that they will have no rest from torment day or night; and that this torment will never have an end. But so far as it respects the body it cannot take place till the day of judgment. And as the wicked go to hell when they die, so the righteous are carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, or heaven.

Mr. Wesley published a sermon on *The torments of Hell.* The text is Mark ix. 48. "*Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*"

He observes, every revealed truth is of importance: yet some are of greater importance than others. And we may judge of their special importance from the circumstance of their being frequently mentioned in the bible. This is the case with the awful truth now before us. Our Lord, who uses no *vain repetitions*, repeats it over and over in the same chapter.

And the consideration of these terrible truths is not proper merely for enormous sinners. Read Luke xii. 1—4. It behoves even those who fear and love God, to consider what is said in the bible about a state of future punishments. The punishment of those who will have their portion with the devil and his angels, will consist of *what they lose*, and *what they feel.*

1. *What they lose.* This *punishment of loss* commences the moment the soul is separated from the body. In that instant the soul loses all the pleasures of the senses. The smell, the taste, the touch, delight no more. The organs that ministered to them are spoiled, and the objects that used to gratify them, are removed far away. All the pleasures of the imagination are at an end. There is no grandeur, or light, or novelty, in those dark abodes. There is no music but that of groans and shrieks, of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth; of curses and blasphemies against God, or cutting reproaches of one another. Nor is there any thing to gratify the sense of honour; they are the heirs of everlasting shame and contempt. Thus are they totally separated from all the *things* they were fond of in this world. And they will lose all the *persons* they here loved. They are torn away from their nearest and dearest relations, every friend, and all the pleasures they yielded them.

But there will be a loss still greater than any, or all of these; they will lose their places in the paradise of God. They will then understand the value of what they have vilely cast away. And paradise is only the porch of heaven. It is *there* is the *fulness* of joy and pleasures *for evermore.* They will then know and feel, that God alone is the centre of all created spirits; and that a spirit can have no rest out of him. It would seem the apostle had this in view, 2 Thes. i. 8, 9. Banishment from the presence of the Lord, is the very essence of destruction to a spirit that was made for God. And if that banishment lasts for ever, it is *everlasting destruction.* But,

II. Their punishment from what they will *feel* or *endure.* (1.) There will be a *worm that will not die.*— This will include a guilty conscience, self-condemna-

tion, sorrow, shame, remorse, and a sense of the wrath of God. What is any anguish in this world, yea, even that of a wounded spirit, when compared with this.—Their souls will be wholly awakened, to feel all the wrath of an angry God. And, add to all this, what they will feel from unholy passions, from fear, rage, and despair; and from unholy tempers, envy, jealousy, malice, and revenge. To these we may add, hatred of God, and all his creatures. Thus will *their* worm torment them.

And the *fire is not quenched.* Perhaps the meaning is, the *fire* will be essentially the same, to all who are tormented therein: only perhaps more intense to some than others, according to their degree of guilt. But *their worm* will not, cannot be the same. It will be infinitely varied according to their various kinds, as well as degrees of wickedness. This variety will arise partly from the just judgment of God, *rewarding every man according to his works.* Variety of punishment will likewise arise from the very nature of the thing. The more wickedness a man brings to hell, the more misery he will find there. And his misery will be varied according to the various kinds of his wickedness. It was therefore proper to say *the fire*, in general; but *their worm* in particular.

Some have questioned whether there be any fire, that is, material fire, in hell. But if there be *any* fire, it must be *material.* For what is *immaterial* fire? The same as immaterial water or earth! Both the one and the other is absolute nonsense, a contradiction in terms. We must therefore affirm this fire to be material, or else deny its existence. But suppose there should be no fire, what would sinners gain by that, seeing all allow it is either fire or something worse? And our Lord speaks of it as if it were *real* fire. This none can deny. Some aver, "It is not possible that fire should burn always. For by the immutable laws of nature, it consumes whatever is thrown into it. And by the same law, as soon as it has consumed its fuel, it is itself consumed, and goes out."

In the present constitution of things, and during the present laws of nature, all this is true. But, the pre-

sent laws of nature are not immutable. With the present constitution of things, the present laws of nature will cease. Afterwards, nothing will dissolve or consume any more. And, therefore, were it true, that fire consumes all things now, it does not follow, that it would do so after the whole frame of nature has undergone a vast and universal change.

And has not God already given some proof of what will be hereafter? Is not the *linum abestum* the incombustible flax, known in most parts of Europe? If you take a towel or handkerchief made of this, (one of which may now be seen in the British Museum,) you may throw it into the hottest fire, and when it is taken out again, it will be observed upon the nicest experiment, not to have lost one grain of weight. We will consider,

III. Two or three circumstances attending the never-dying worm, and the unquenchable fire. (1.) Consider the company that will surround every one that gets into that place of torment. In our public prisons, even condemned criminals often exclaim, "They wish they were hanged out of the way, rather than be plagued with the wretches round about them." But what are the most abandoned wretches compared to the inhabitants of hell? None of the inhabitants of earth are yet perfectly emptied of all good: certainly will not be so during life; and perhaps not till the day of judgment. But the damned in hell have no good remaining in them, but are totally, and in the highest degree wicked.

(2.) All these torments of body and soul are without intermission. *They have no rest day or night, but the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.*— According to the present constitution of the world, God has wisely and graciously ordained, that day and night should succeed each other. And the very extremity of pain, suspends or mitigates it. But not so in hell.

(3.) Of this duration *there is no end.* Nothing but eternity is the term of this torment. And who can count the drops of rain, or the sands of the sea, or the days of eternity? Every suffering is softened, if there be any hope, though distant, of deliverance from it.

But here "Hope never comes, that comes to all! From that place of torment there is no redemption."

To conclude, what a guard should these considerations be against any temptations from pleasure? Will you lose for any of these poor earthly, sensual pleasures, the pleasures of heaven, the society of angels, the company of the spirits of just men made perfect, of Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and of God the judge of all? What folly, what madness equal to this! Are you tempted by pain either of body or mind? Compare things present with things future. What is any pain of body, or of mind, to *the worm that never dieth?*

Lastly, let us be thankful, that we who have so much deserved it, are not already plunged into it. And let us take care that we never come into that place of torment.

The 80th hymn in our large hymn-book, is on the terrible subject of hellish torments. It runs thus:

"Terrible thought, shall I alone,
Who may be saved, shall I,
Of all, alas! whom I have known,
Through sin for ever die?

While all my old companions dear,
With whom I once did live,
Joyful at God's right hand appear,
A blessing to receive.

Shall I amidst a ghastly band,
Dragg'd to the judgment-seat,
Far on the left with horror stand,
My fearful doom to meet

Ah! no, I still may turn and live;
For still his wrath delays;
He now vouchsafes a kind reprieve,
And offers me his grace.

I will accept his offers now,
From every sin depart;
Perform my oft repeated vow,
And render him my heart," &c.

3. The Methodists believe heaven to be a place of light and glory; that good men will live there in joy and happiness greater than they can now desire or

think: that they will suffer nothing there; will have spiritual bodies; that their chief happiness will lie in the enjoyment of God, that is, in knowing, loving, and seeing God face to face; that they will spend their time in singing praise to God; and that this happiness will last for ever and ever.

4. They believe God has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousnes by Christ Jesus. The Judge will be the Son of God and the Saviour of man; he will come accompanied by angels, and with flaming fire; the dead will be raised up, and stand before the judgment seat of Christ; the books will be opened, and every work will be brought into judgment, with every secret thing; and the Judge will say to the righteous, who shall stand on his right hand, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you." And he will say to the wicked, who will stand upon his left hand, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

The chief end for which God hath appointed this day, is the manifestation of the glory of his perfections, as of his *power* in raising the dead, and collecting the universe of his rational creatures to his bar: his *wisdom* in knowing all the actions, words, dispositions and thoughts of all mankind, with the various circumstances and qualities of each; his *holiness* and *justice* in hating and punishing sin, and his *mercy* and *love* towards his believing and obedient children. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fulness of joy and gladness, which shall proceed from the perfect vision and enjoyment of him. But such as in the days of their flesh "knew not God, and obeyed not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power."

But while Christ would have us to be fully assured that there will be a day of judgment, both to deter men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the righteous in their afflictions; so he will keep the exact period of time, when that day shall be, unknown to men, that they may shake off all carnal security, and be always ready and watchful, not knowing at what hour the

Lord will come; and may be always prepared to meet him, and to say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

Mr. Wesley preached at the assizes in Bedford, on March 10, 1758. His text was, Rom. xiv. 10. "*We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.*" After a suitable introduction, he proceeds to treat on,

I. The chief circumstances which will precede the great judgment. (1.) "God will show signs in the earth beneath," Acts ii. 19. Luke xxi. 11. Rev. xvi. 20. Joel ii. 30, 31. Luke xxi, 25, 26. Joel iii. 15. 1 Thes. iv. 16. Rev. xx. 13. 1 Cor. xv. 53.

(2.) The Son of man shall send forth his angels over the earth, Matt. xxiv. 31, &c. The Lord shall come with clouds, in his glory, Matt. xxv. 31. And before him shall be gathered all nations, and the dead, small and great, shall stand before God. And the books will be opened, (a figurative expression, plainly referring to the manner of proceeding among men,) and the dead shall be judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works. He considers,

II. The judgment itself. And (1.) *The Judge; that man whom he hath ordained, the Son of man*, and yet *the Son of God;* the gracious Redeemer of mankind.

2. *The day:* it is emphatically styled *the day of the Lord.* The present time is *our day:* but when time shall be ended, then will come the day of the Lord.—How long it will last, we cannot tell. From the expression of Peter, 2 Peter iii. 8. "One day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," some of the ancient fathers inferred, that the *day of judgment* would be a thousand years. And it seems they did not go beyond the truth: nay, probably they did not come up to it. For if we consider the number of persons to be judged, and the things to be inquired into, it would appear, that a thousand years will hardly be sufficient for the transactions of that day. Probably it may comprise several thousand years. But God shall reveal this in its season.

3. As to the *place* of judgment, the scripture gives no explicit account. Some, yea, many have supposed it will be on earth, where the works were done, and that in order that there may be sufficient room, the Lord will employ the angels of his strength,

"To smooth and lengthen out the boundless space,
And spread an area for all human race."

But it is more probable that it will be *in the clouds*,—1 Thes. iv. 16, 17.

(4.) The *persons* to be judged will be as countless as the drops of rain, or the sands of the sea: a great multitude which no man can number. Every man, woman, and child, since the world began till time shall be no more. And the common supposition is, which does not seem absurd, that the earth bears at no one time less than four hundred millions of living human beings. In a succession of generations, for seven thousand years, what a congregation will this make?

(5.) The *account* to be given. *Every work shall be brought into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Words as well as works*, yea, the very secrets of the heart, will then be brought into judgment. God *will bring to light the hidden things of darkness*, and the very *thoughts and intents of the heart*. In that day shall be discovered every inward working of every human soul: every appetite, passion, inclination, and affection, with the various combinations of them, with every temper and disposition that constitute the whole complex character of each individual.

(6.) "The King will say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father," &c. All the good they did upon earth, will be recited before men and angels. All their good desires, intentions, thoughts, and dispositions, will also be remembered. And all their sufferings, for the name of Jesus, for righteousness sake, and for the testimony of a good conscience.

(7.) Many believe that the evil deeds of those who die in the Lord will not then be brought forward, and refer to Ezek. xviii. 21, 22. Jer. xxxi. 34. Heb. viii. 12. But the full display of the glory of God, and the clear and perfect manifestation of his wisdom, justice, power, and mercy towards the heirs of salvation, seems to render it necessary that all the circumstances of their lives should be placed in open view, together with all their tempers, desires, thoughts, and intentions of their

hearts. Otherwise it would not appear from what a depth of sin and misery the grace of God had delivered them. It will be sufficient for them, that "their sins will be remembered no more" to their condemnation: and this is the plain meaning of the promise, Jer. xxxi. 34.

(8.) After the righteous are judged, the King will turn to them on the left hand, and judge them also according to their works. And not only their *works* shall be judged, but also their words, desires, affections, tempers, thoughts and designs. Consider,

III. Some circumstances which will follow the judgment. (1.) The execution of the sentence pronounced on the evil and the good. "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." The same word is used in both cases: it follows that either the punishment lasts forever, or the reward too will come to an end.

(2.) The heavens will pass away, and being on fire will be dissolved, Rev. xx. 11. 2 Pet. iii. 12.—v. 10.

(3.) New heavens and a new earth will succeed, 2 Pet. v. 13. Isa. lxv. 7. Rev. xx. 1, 3, 4.—xxii. 3, 4.

CHAPTER III.

THE DISCIPLINE OF THE METHODISTS.

THE rules of discipline were not made all at once, but almost every conference has made some addition, as circumstances have required. Hence they are very numerous, and in some few instances do not perfectly harmonize. It would be a great service rendered to the connexion to digest and simplify these rules. Something of this kind is attempted in this chapter, but in giving a faithful account, matters must be stated as they really exist.

Some of the rules were made to suit circumstances, which in their own nature were but temporary; and the candid reader, who considers the vast variety of

circumstances in which Methodism has been placed, during more than seventy years, the many peculiar difficulties which have occurred; together with the variety of disposition and information possessed by the preachers, will allow, that the greatest wonder is, that so much consistency has been maintained, and that so little requires expunging or altering.

The rules of the society, drawn up and signed by Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, May 1, 1743, in the very infancy of Methodism, and which rules still remain in force, furnish us with the most early, authentic, and important document respecting the discipline of the Methodists. The next in point of authenticity, and which may be considered as a continuation of the rules, or a supplement, is contained in what has been added to the original rules by the order of the conference, and stands connected with the old rules in the copy which I here insert.

The General Rules of the United Societies, in London, Bristol, Kingswood, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, &c. to which are added, sundry particular Regulations made in some late Conferences of the Preachers.

RULES OF THE SOCIETY.

I. In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired, (as did two or three more the next day,) that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when they might all come together; which, from thenceforward they did every week; viz. on Thursday in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them, (for their number increased daily,) I gave those advices from time to time which I judged most needful for them; and we always concluded our meeting with prayer suitable to their several necessities.

2. This was the rise of the UNITED SOCIETY, first in London, and then in other places. Such a society is no other, than "A company of men having the form, and seeking the power of godliness: united, in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation."

3. That it may the more easily be discerned, whether they are indeed working out their own salvation, each society is divided into smaller companies, called classes, according to their respective places of abode. There are about twelve persons in every class: one of whom is styled the leader. It is his business,

(1.) To see each person in his class, once a week at least, in order,

To inquire how their souls prosper;

To advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require;

To receive what they are willing to give towards the support of the gospel.

(2.) To meet the minister and the stewards of the society once a week, in order,

To inform the minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly, and will not be reproved.

To pay to the stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding: And

To show their account of what each person has contributed.

4. There is one only condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies, viz. "a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and be saved from their sins:" but wherever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shown by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

First, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind: especially that which is most generally practised. Such as

The taking the name of God in vain:

The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling:

Drunkenness; *buyiug* or *selling spiritous liquors;* or *drinking them*, unless in cases of extreme necessity:

Fighting, *quarrelling brawling;* brother *going to law* with brother; returning *evil for evil*, or *railing for railing;* the *using many words* in buying or selling:

The *buying* or *selling uncustomed goods:*

The *giving* or *taking things on usury*, i. e. unlawful interest:

Uncharitable or *unprofitable* conversation; particularly speaking evil of magistrates, or of ministers.

Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us:

Doing what we know is not for the glory of God: As,

The *putting on of gold or costly apparel:*

The *taking such diversions* as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus:

The *singing* those *songs*, or *reading* those *books*, that do not tend to the knowledge or love of God:

Softness, and needless self-indulgence:

Laying up treasure upon earth:

Borrowing without a probability of paying: or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

5. It is expected of all who continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Secondly, By doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power, as they have opportunity: doing good of every possible sort, and as far as possible to all men:

To their bodies, of the ability that God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick, or in prison:

To their souls, by instructing, reproving, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with: trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine, that, "We are not to do good, unless our hearts be free to it."

By doing good especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be: employing them preferably to others, buying one of another, helping each other in business: and so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them *only.*

By all possible *diligence* and *frugality*, that the gospel be not blamed.

By running with patience the race that is set before them, *denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily;* submitting to bear the reproach of Christ; to be as the filth and offscouring of the world; and looking that men should *say all manner of evil of them falsely for the Lord's sake.*

6. It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation:

Thirdly, by attending on all the ordinances of God; such are,

The public worship of God:

The ministry of the word, either read or expounded:

The supper of the Lord:

Family and private prayer:

Searching the scriptures, and

Fasting, or abstinence.

7. These are the General Rules of our societies; all which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written word, the only rule, and the sufficient rule both of our faith and practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul, as they that must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways: we will bear with him for a season. But then, if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.

May 1, 1743. J. & C. Wesley.

The following resolution was entered in the Minutes of the Conference, in 1797.

"We have determined that all the rules which relate to the societies, leaders, stewards, local preachers, trustees, and quarterly meetings, shall be published, with the rules of the society, for the benefit and convenience of all the members."

A new edition of the rules being called for: in exe-

cation of the above-mentioned determination, the following rules being the most material, are here subjoined.

RULES RELATING TO THE SOCIETIES.

I. *Of Receiving Members in the Society.*

1. The leaders' meeting has a right to declare any persons on trial improper to be received into the society: and, after such declaration, the superintendent shall not admit such person into society.

2. Neither the superintendents nor any other preachers, shall give tickets to any, till they are recommended by a leader with whom they have met, at least two months on trial.

3. No preacher shall give notes, (admitting persons on trial) to any but those who are recommended by one he knows, or till they have met three or four times in a class.

4. He must give them the rules of the society, the first time they meet.

5. As some of our people have, in different parts of the kingdom, been imposed on, in various ways, by swindlers, who professed themselves members of our society, let no person be received into any society without a certificate, signed by one of the itinerant preachers in the circuit, from whence he professes to have come. 1799.

II. *Of the Exclusion of Members from the Society.*

1. The far greater number of those that are separated from us, exclude themselves by neglecting to meet in class, and use the other means of grace, and so gradually forsake us. With regard to others,

2. Our rule is fixed, and our custom expressed in the preceding rules of society, where it is said, "If there be any among us, who observe them not, who habitually break any of them,—we will admonish him of the error of his ways; we will bear with him for a season: but then if he repent not, he hath no more place among us."

3. No person must be expelled from the society for any breach of our rules, or even for manifest immorality, till such fact or crime has been proved at a leaders' meeting.

III. *Of permitting Strangers to be present at the Society Meetings and Love-Feasts.*

1. Let every other meeting of the society be for the members of the society only; and let no strangers be admitted. At other times some may be permitted to be present: but the same person not above three times.

2. Let all the members of the society show their tickets: and if the stewards and leaders are not exact, others must be employed that have more resolution.

3. Let no person attend any love-feast without a note from the preacher.

4. Let no love-feast be appointed but by the consent of the superintendent; nor any funeral sermon be preached without his consent, and for those only who die happy in the Lord.

IV. *Of Service in Church Hours.*

The cases in which it has been agreed to allow service in what are commonly called church hours, are,—

1. When the church minister, rector, vicar, or curate, is a notoriously wicked man.

2. When he preaches Arian, Socinian, or any other equally pernicious doctrine.

3. When there are not churches in the town or parish sufficient to contain the people.

4. When there is no church within two or three miles.

5. Where a majority of the trustees of any chapel, on the one hand, and of the stewards and leaders of the society belonging to that chapel, on the other, allow of and request it: and as to places where there is a society and no chapel, wherever the majority of the stewards and leaders of that society testify that it is the wish of the people, and that it will cause no division among them.

6. Wherever divine service is performed in England on the Lord's day, in church hours, the officiating preachers shall read either the service of the church, our venerable father's abridgment of it, or at least the lessons appointed by the calendar. But we recommend either the full service or the abridgment.

V. *Concerning the Administration of the Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper in our Societies.*

1. The sacrament of the Lord's supper shall not be administered in any chapel, except a majority of the trustees of that chapel on the one hand, and the majority of stewards and leaders belonging to that chapel, (as the best qualified to give the sense of the people,) on the other, allow it. Nevertheless, in all cases the consent of conference shall be first obtained before this ordinance shall be administered.

2. Where there is a society but no chapel, if the majority of the stewards and leaders of that society testify, in writing, to the conference, that it is the wish of the people that the Lord's supper should be administered among them, and that no separation will be made thereby, their desire shall be granted.

3. The sacrament of the Lord's supper shall not be administered to a society in a private house, within two miles of a Methodist chapel.

4. The Lord's supper shall be administered by the superintendent only, or such of his helpers as are in full connexion, and as he shall appoint; provided that no preacher be required to give it against his own inclination; and should it be granted to any place where the preachers on the circuit are all unwilling to give it, the superintendent shall, in that case, invite a neighbouring preacher who is properly qualified to give it.

5. It shall be administered at such times and in such manner as the conference shall appoint. And the conference agree that the Lord's supper shall be administered among us on Sunday evenings only; except the majority of the stewards and leaders desire it in church hours; or where it has already been administered in those hours. Nevertheless, it shall never be adminis-

tered on those Sundays on which it is administered in the parish church.

6. The Lord's Supper shall always be administered in England according to the form of the established church: but the person who administers shall have liberty to give out hymns, to use exhortation and extemporary prayer.

7. Wherever the Lord's supper shall be administered according to the above-mentioned regulations, it shall always be continued, except the conference order otherwise.

8. No person shall be suffered, on any pretence, to partake of the Lord's supper among us, unless he be a member of Society, or receive a note of admission from the superintendent, (or the preacher administering,) which note must be renewed quarterly. And if any leaders stewards, or trustees refuse to be regulated by this rule, the sacrament shall not be administered where this is the case.

9. The administration of baptism and the burial of the dead, shall be determined according to the regulations above-mentioned respecting the Lord's Supper.

VI. *On Conformity to the World, and Sabbath Breaking.*

1. Those schoolmasters and schoolmistresses who receive dancing-masters into their schools, and those parents who employ dancing-masters for their children, shall be no longer members of our society.

2. To prevent or remedy the evils of dram-drinking, evil-speaking, unprofitable conversation, lightness, expensiveness, or gaiety of apparel, and contracting debts without due care to discharge them, or smuggling, buying or selling uncustomed goods, the preachers shall solemnly and frequently warn the societies against these evils, and inform them that they who are guilty of them, cannot be permitted to remain with us.

3. We strongly recommend to all the membess of our societies, the religious observation of the Lord's day, and desire our superintendents to exclude from the society all who buy or sell on that sacred day, except

in case of medicine for the sick, or for supplying necessaries for funerals.

4. No member of our society must employ any barber on the Lord's day. And all our people, who possibly can, are desired to employ only those barbers who conscientiously abstain from sabbath breaking.

5. No member of our society must make any wake or feast, or go to any on the Lord's day, but bear a public testimony againt them.

VII. *Of Marrying with Unbelievers.*

Some of our members have married with unbelievers, yea, with unawakened persons. This has had fatal effects. They have had either a cross for life, or turned back unto perdition. To put a stop to this, every preacher is enjoined to enforce frequently the apostle's caution, "Be not unequally yoked." And he is openly to declare that whoever does this shall be expelled the society. When any such are expelled, he is to subjoin a suitable exhortation, and to urge all single persons to take no step in so weighty a matter, without advising with the most serious of their Christian friends.

VIII. *Of Bankruptcies.*

To prevent scandal, when any of our members become bankrupts, the superintendent shall talk with them at large. And if any of them have not kept fair accounts, or have been concerned in the base practice of raising money by coining notes, (commonly called the bill trade) he shall be expelled immediately.

IX. *Of Loyalty and Subjection to the King and Government.*

None of us shall, either in writing or conversation, speak lightly or irreverently of the government under which we live. We are to observe that the oracles of God command us to be subject to the higher powers: and that "honour to the King" is there connected with the "fear of God." 1792.

X. *Of Days of Fasting.*

A general fast shall be held in all our societies, the first Friday after New-Year's-day; after Lady-day: after Midsummer-day; and after Michaelmas-day.

RULES RELATING TO THE OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETIES.

I. *Of the Appointment, or Change of Stewards and Leaders.*

1. No person shall be appointed a leader or society-steward, or be removed from his office, but in conjunction with a leader's meeting, the nomination to be in the superintendent, and the approbation or disapprobation in the leaders' meeting.

2. As several inconveniencies have arisen respecting the change of stewards; to remedy this let it be observed, that the office of a steward ceases at the end of the year: and every superintendent is required to change one steward at least; so that no steward may be in office above two years together, except in some extraordinary cases.

3. The proper time for changing the circuit stewards, is at the quarterly-meeting, when the superintendent shall consult all who are present, respecting the most proper person or persons to act in that capacity.

4. The place for appointing or changing the steward of any particular society, is the leaders' meeting of that society. For in the general, "No person can be received as a society-officer among us without the consent of that meeting to which he particularly belongs; nor can any officer be appointed except on the same plan." Minutes of 1797.

5. The superintendent of every circuit shall invite the general steward of his circuit, to be present at the annual meeting of the district committee, during the settling of every thing relating to the finances of the distrist; and every circuit steward shall have a right to be present, and to advise at the settlement of all financial matters. 1801.

II. *Of the Local Preachers and their Meetings.*

1. The superintendent shall regularly meet the local preachers once a quarter, and no person shall receive a plan as a local preacher, nor be suffered to preach among us as such, without the approbation of that meeting. Or, if in any circuit a regular local preacher's meeting cannot be held, they shall be proposed and approved at the general quarterly meeting of the circuit. 1794.

2. All local preachers shall meet in class. No exception shall be made in respect to any who have been travelling preachers in former years. 1793.

3. Let no local preacher, who will not meet in class, or who is not regularly planned by the superintendent of the circuit where he resides, be permitted to preach.

4. Let no local preacher be permitted to preach in any other circuit than his own, without producing a recommendation from the superintendent of that circuit in which he lives; nor suffer any invitation to be admitted as a plea, except from men in office, who act in conjunction with the superintendent of that circuit which he visits. N. B. The design of this rule is to prevent any, under the character of local preachers, from burthening the people, either by collecting money or living upon them, and to prevent improper persons, who bear no part of the expense, from inviting local preachers thus to visit them. But it was never intended to reflect the least disrespect on any of our worthy brethren, the local preachers, whom, as a body, we greatly respect.

5. Let no local preacher keep love-feasts, without the consent of the superintendent, nor in any wise interfere with his business. Let every one keep in his own place, and attend to the duties of his station.

6. No preacher who has been suspended or expelled, shall on any account be employed as a local preacher, without the authority of conference.

III. *Concerning Trustees.*

1. The trustees in conjunction with the superintendent, who shall have one vote only, shall choose their

own stewards; who shall receive and disburse all seat-rents, and such collections as shall be made for the purpose of paying interest of money due upon the premises, or for reducing the principal. The aforesaid stewards shall keep proper accounts in books provided for that purpose; which books shall be open for the inspection of the superintendent, and audited in his presence once every year; or oftener, if convenient.

2. No trustee, (however accused, or defective in conformity to the established rules of the society,) shall be removed from the society; unless his crime or breach of the rules of the society be proved, in the presence of the trustees and leaders. 1794.

IV. *Of the Quarterly Meetings composed of the Stewards of the different Societies in each Circuit.*

1. All bills for the support of travelling preachers, and their families; for house-rent, fire, candles, sickness, travelling expences, and all other matters, for which the circuits cannot provide, shall meet with the approbation of the quarterly meetings, and be signed by the general steward of the circuit, before they can be brought to the district committee.

2. No circuits shall be divided, till such division has been approved by the respective quarterly meetings, and signed by the general steward.

3. Before any superintendent propose a preacher to the conference as proper to be admitted on trial, such preacher must be approved of at the quarterly meeting. 1797.

The rule respecting *giving or taking things on usury*, i. e. unlawful interest, was made against giving or taking things in pawn: and that was before pawnbroking was legalized by act of parliament. I have never known any person called to account for this in thirty years.—What is here said about *spirituous liquors*, I have heard Mr. Wesley explain at the last conference before his death. When asking the preachers, who were going to be received into full connexion, "Do you drink any drams?" he said; "I mean spirits alone, or mixed

with water. Here it will be needful to take great care." Dr. Fothergill himself said, he made many drunkards; having advised persons in certain complaints to drink a little spirit and water. But what they used at first as medicine, they continued to use from contracted taste and habit."

It may be proper to insert also,

THE RULES OF THE BAND SOCIETIES,

Drawn up December 25, 1738.

The design of our meeting, is to obey that command of God, *Confess your faults one to another, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed.*

To this end, we intend,

1. To meet once a week, at the least.

2. To come punctually at the hour appointed, without some extraordinary reason.

3. To begin (those of us who are present) exactly at the hour with singing or prayer.

4. To speak each of us in order freely and plainly the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word, or deed, and temptations we have felt since our last meeting.

5. To end every meeting with prayer, suited to the state of each person present.

6. To desire some person among us to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins, and temptations.

Some of the questions proposed to every one before he is admitted among us, may be to this effect.

1. Have you the forgiveness of your sins?

2. Have you peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ?

3. Have you the witness of God's Spirit with your spirit, that you are a child of God?

4. Is the love of God shed abroad in your heart?

5. Has no sin, inward or outward, dominion over you?

6. Do you desire to be told of your faults.

7. Do you desire to be told of all your faults? and that plain and home?

8. Do you desire, that every one of us should tell you, from time to time, whatsoever is in his heart concerning you?

9. Consider! Do you desire, we should tell you whatsoever we think, whatsoever we fear, whatsoever we hear, concerning you?

10. Do you desire, that in doing this, we should come as close as possible, that we should cut to the quick, and search your heart to the bottom?

11. Is it your desire and design, to be on this and all other occasions, entirely open, so as to speak every thing that is in your heart without exception, without disguise, and without reserve?

Any of the preceding questions may be asked as often as occasion offers: the four following at every meeting:

1. What known sins have you committed since our last meeting?

2. What temptations have you met with?

3. How was you delivered?

4. What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?

Directions given to the Band Societies, December 25, 1744.

You are supposed to have the *faith that overcometh the world.* To you therefore it is not grievous,

I. Carefully to abstain from doing evil; in particular,

1. Neither to *buy* or *sell* any thing at all on the Lord's day.

2. To taste no spirituous liquor, *no dram* of any kind, unless prescribed by a physician.

3. To be *at a word* both in buying and selling.

4. To *pawn nothing*, no, not to save life.

5. Not to *mention the fault* of any *behind his back*, and to stop those short that do.

6 To wear no *needless ornaments*, such as rings, earrings, necklaces, lace, ruffles.

7. To use no *needless self-indulgence*, such as taking snuff or tobacco, unless prescribed by a physician.

II. Zealously to maintain good works: in particular,

1. To *give alms* of such things as you possess, and that to the uttermost of your power.

2. To *reprove* all that sin in your sight, and that in love and meekness of wisdom.

3. To be patterns of *diligence* and *frugality*, of *self-denial*, and taking up the cross daily.

III. Constantly to attend on all the ordinances of God: in particular,

1. To be at church and at the Lord's table every week, and at every public meeting of the bands.

2. To attend the ministry of the word every morning, unless distance, business, or sickness prevent.

3. To use private prayer every day; and family prayer, if you are the head of a family.

4. To read the scriptures, and meditate therein, at every vacant hour. And,

5. To observe as days of fasting or abstinence, all *Fridays* in the year.

Before we enter into the minutia of the discipline of the Methodists, it may be proper to describe their

General Mode of Public Worship.

The service commences with singing, in which the congregation joins. After this the preacher offers up an extemporary prayer. He then gives out a few more verses of a hymn, after which he takes his text, and begins his sermon. The Methodists preach, as well as pray, extempore. In some places, however, they read the Common Prayer, of the Church of England, either the whole service, or Mr. Wesley's abridgment of it. And where they do neither, on the Sunday forenoons, they read either one or both of the lessons appointed by the calender. But when the preachers read the Common prayer, they add extemporary prayer. They seldom pray long, as Mr. Wesley advised them not to pray more than five or eight minutes at one time; he likewise cautioned them against long singing, as well as long and loud preaching. In these respects he was himself a pattern, seldom detaining the congregation more than an hour. In general they do not deliver

long discourses, nor do they wrap up their sermons in a mumbling whisper, in about twelve or fifteen minutes. They see no need of running into one extreme to avoid the opposite one.

On Sunday evenings, when the congregations are large, their sermons are longer than usual. But in general they do not preach more than forty or fifty minutes. And although they do not read their sermons, nothing rhapsodical or incoherent is approved. Few of them ever write out their sermons, yet they premeditate, and study the order and substance of their discourses; and preaching so frequently renders the exercise comparatively easy. However, this does not prevent the preacher from recollecting that divine assistance is essentially necessary, both in preparing for the pulpit, and in preaching. "We are not sufficient of ourselves, to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God," 2 Cor. iii. 5. Much less can we speak publicly to edification, unless the Lord assist us, and accompany the word by the Holy Ghost, and thus make it the savour of life unto life.

Mr. Wesley advised his preachers to preach Christ, and that in some measure in every sermon; to preach him in all his offices; to declare the law as well as the gospel, both to believers and unbelievers; and strongly to insist upon the necessity of inward and outward holiness. He advised them to set forth Christ as evidently crucified before their eyes; Christ in all the riches of his grace, justifying us by his blood, and sanctifying us by his Spirit. He also advised them always to suit their subject to the state of their audiences; to choose the plainest texts; to take care not to ramble from their text, and to make out what they took in hand; to be sparing in allegorizing or spiritualizing; to beware of any thing awkward or affected in their gesture, phrase, or pronunciation; and to let their whole deportment before the congregation be serious and solemn.

After the sermon is ended, another hymn is sung, and the service concludes with a short extemporary prayer, and the usual benediction contained in 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Though this form of worship be plain and simple, yet it is solemn and edifying.

Singing makes a more considerable part of the worship of the Methodists than perhaps of that of any other denomination of Christians; hardly any exercise so powerfully affects and raises the soul to heavenly things, as that of singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

The hymns used, not only breath a spirit of piety, but are beautifully poetic. Most of them were written by Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, and far the larger number by the latter. As a composer of sacred poetry, the world has seldom produced an equal to him. The merits of Dr. Watts, as a poetic writer, are universally acknowledged, and none will deny, I presume, that he was a competent judge of poetry. The Doctor was so charmed with the poetry of Mr. Charles Wesley, that he did not scruple to assert, that that single poem of his, entitled, "Wrestling Jacob," which may be found in page 137, of our large hymn-book, was worth all the poems which himself had ever written.

The hymns used by the Methodists, are adapted to the various states and exercises of the mind of a pious person, and to all the different circumstances of life.—Our large hymn-book contains a body of experimental and practical divinity, and is variously calculated to assist and quicken men to walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost. Together with the charms of poetry, they display the purity, strength, and elegance of the English language; and what is of the greatest moment, is the spirit of piety, which the reader will find breathing through the whole collection.

It has been objected to the worship of the Methodists, that on some occasions, sundry persons have been much affected: and have cried out in prayer or praise; in short that there has been considerable noise in the place of assembly.

In answer to this objection, I would make a few remarks. I believe, there are now extraordinary out-pourings of the Spirit of God, and on these occasions, some persons may not be able to restrain themselves: besides, there may be occasions, when it may be advantageously allowed for a season. However, it is seldom that disorder can lay claim to a scriptural license. On the other hand, I will not advocate the cause of dead form-

ality in religion, nor attempt to justify those who lay too much stress on undeviating order and cold uniformity. Of the two extremes, the latter is the worse.

When in the ordinary affairs of life, we are oppressed with grief, or elated with joy, our words, our gesture, and our countenance, proclaim the state of our minds. And we need not wonder, that a man just enlightened to see, and awakened to feel, that he is a guilty, condemned, and helpless sinner, should be in consequence overwhelmed with an horrible dread, and like the publican, should smite upon his breast, and cry, "*God be merciful to me a sinner:*" or, that feeling the arrows of the Almighty sticking fast in his flesh, and the poison thereof drinking up his spirits, he should implore mercy with strong cries and tears. When the Lord inclines his ear unto him, and hears his cry; when he brings him out of the horrible pit, and the miry clay, sets his feet upon a rock, and orders his goings; when a new song is put into his mouth, of praise and thanksgiving; is it surprising that he should cry out and shout, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my Spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour?" or, that he should call upon his soul, and all that is therein, to bless that merciful and gracious Lord, who has forgiven all his sins, and lifted upon him the light of his countenance, who has filled him with peace and joy in believing, and given him a good hope through grace, of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for him?

Such a person could scarcely be accused of disorder, or improper conduct, should he say to those around,—"Come hither, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul: for he hath brought me out of darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto himself, so that I have received forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them who are sanctified, by faith that is in Christ Jesus." But in general, the Methodist congregations are as orderly as any others.

Before I quit the subject of our public worship, I would mention a few other circumstances.

There is nothing in which the Methodists manifest so little uniformity as in the hours of their service, espe-

cially on Sundays. In some of their chapels, the preaching is at seven o'clock in the morning, and six in the evening; in some at nine in the morning, half past one, and six; and in others at half past ten, at two, and at six. And in some few instances, there are still other variations: this is regulated by circumstances, and those times are fixed upon, which are judged to be the best. Methodism becomes all things lawful to all men, in order the more effectually to promote their salvation. As far as circumstances would admit, Mr. Wesley and his followers, have laboured to maintain a strict union with the church of England. But as they had no other bond of union than that of piety, some joined them who had been brought up dissenters; and in consequence of this, the ministers to whose congregations they had formerly belonged, refused to let them partake of the Lord's supper with them, and also to baptize their children. Some ministers of the established church behaved in a similar way; others of these were so miserably deficient in point of religion, that many of them could not in conscience receive the sacrament at their hands.—There were others, whose preaching was so contrary to the articles and homilies of the church, or so full of bitter railing against the Methodists, that many could not think it to be their duty to attend their ministry.

In some places also, our chapels were at a great distance from any church; and in others the churches were too small. In consequence of these circumstances, our service was allowed in church hours, in sundry places. This was strongly opposed by some of the preachers, and by many of the people. But where a large majority was in favor of it, and no division of the society was likely to take place, the conference found themselves under the necessity of conceding the point. Where a majority of the trustees, the stewards, and leaders, signify to the conference their desire to have service in those hours, their desire is complied with.

The case is the same respecting the Lord's supper, the baptizing of children by our preachers, and burying the dead, in burying grounds belonging to our chapels; where the majority of the trustees, stewards, and leaders are against these, nothing of the kind takes place.

Meantime, the preachers are neither to do nor say any thing to influence the people either the one way or the other. And no preacher is *required* to read the Common Prayer, or to baptize, or to administer the Lord's supper, or bury the dead, contrary to his own judgment. As to the people, where we have these privileges, some join their brethren in them, and some do not, but go to the church, receive the sacrament, have their children baptized, and bury their dead there. To this we make no objections, but let every man do as he is persuaded in his own mind. The Methodists believe, that they were not raised up to do good to any one denomination of people only, but to rush through every opening door, to spread scriptural holiness over the land, and in some measure over the world; till names, and sects, and parties fall, and all Christians be of one fold under one shepherd.

In administering the Lord's supper, baptizing of children, and burying the dead, we adhere to the form of the church of England: though some of the preachers deviate from it a little; no strict uniformity is insisted upon, but every one is allowed to use his own judgment. In giving the Lord's supper, we sing suitable verses of hymns, and pray extempore. And in burying the dead, the officiating preacher frequently delivers a short appropriate discourse to those who are present.

Prayer Meetings

Are in much esteem, and are well attended by the Methodists, especially on Sunday evenings. These are usually held in private houses, both in cities, towns, and villages in the country; they generally continue about an hour, and are very useful to many persons, who from want of decent clothes, or unavoidable confinement, do not attend any place of worship during the day.—Religious impressions have been made upon many minds at these meetings. They are very useful also, in affording young men of piety and promising abilities, an apportunity for exercising their gifts in prayer and exhortation. Three or four exercise at each prayer

meeting, each one giving out a hymn, and then offering up an extemporary prayer.

There is a special description of meetings for prayer, termed *Intercession:* these are held on Fridays, at twelve o'clock, in some of the oldest societies. But they became more general a few years ago, when the conference recommended, that a prayer meeting should be held every Friday, to intercede for our nation, involved in war, and various other distresses. But in manufacturing places, the forenoon was inconvenient, and the meeting was appointed for the evening; these meetings are held weekly still. And in these little assemblies, many fervent, and I trust effectual prayers, are put up for our king and country; for all descriptions of people in the nation, and for all the world.

In some of the societies, on Saturday evenings, there is held what is called,

The Meeting of the Penitents.

This was instituted for the special purpose of addressing those who were convinced of sin, sorry for their transgressions, and mournfully seeking mercy. Frequently, however, the officiating preacher speaks a seasonable word to others also. Singing and prayer constitute part of the exercises at these meetings.

Admission into the Society.

In general, no person is admitted into society, even upon trial, except recommended by some person acquainted with them, and after meeting once or more in class. The superintendent has power to admit *on trial*, persons recommended by a leader with whom they have met, and to give notes of permission to love-feasts, without such recommendation, if he think proper. Yet in all doubtful cases, prudence directs him to consult such as are most likely to furnish him with the necessary information. Every person admitted into the society, is not only to conform to the rules just before inserted, but is required to meet in the class to which he or she belongs, at every opportunity.

Class Meeting.

A class-meeting opens by singing a few verses of a hymn, and the leader making a short prayer. He says a few words on the subject of his own experience as a Christian; and then speaks to each member of the class in the order in which their names stand in the paper, generally asking a few pertinent questions respecting their religious affections and practice, while he gives to each such instructions, cautions, reproofs, or encouragements, as the case seems to require.

FORM OF THE CLASS PAPER.

Month.	June.				July.			
Day.	3	10	17	24	1	8	15	22
Thomas Cooper	*d.*							
Elizab. Cooper	*s*							
William Unwin	*b.*							
Mary Unwin	*n.*							
Joseph Townley	*a.*							
John Short	*p.*							
Samuel Tate	*p*							
Henry Elliot	*p.*							

These meetings are of the highest advantage to those who attend them. They afford opportunities for teaching religious truths, for quickening languishing piety, stirring up persons who have grown weary and faint in their minds, for encouraging feeble and disconsolate spirits, as well as promoting Christian union. The meeting closes with another hymn and prayer.

The Appointment and Office of Class Leaders.

In forming a new society, consisting of only one class, it is the province of the superintendent of the circuit to appoint the leader. But he fixes upon one, according to the best of his judgment, who will be most suitable for the office, as well as agreeable to the people who now join. Nearly the same may be said respecting the appointment of a new leader to any society consisting of one class only. But where there are several classes belonging to the same society, it is done according to the rule.

The office of a leader consists in meeting his class as above; in visiting those who absent themselves from the class, and the sick members belonging to it; in receiving the weekly contributions before-mentioned, in attending the leaders' meetings, and at those meetings paying the class-money into the hands of the stewards of the society; giving his vote upon any proposal for the exclusion or admission of a member of society, or the appointment of new stewards for that society; to which we must add, that he must show his class-paper to the officiating preacher, and answer questions put to him respecting any who neglect to meet in his class, or any whose characters are rendered doubtful, or may be the subjects of inquiry.

A person appointed to be leader of a class, is supposed to be not only moral, but truly pious; of sound judgment, zealous for the salvation of souls, of good report, and apt to teach, according to the nature and design of class-meetings. And he should state to his class the propriety of contributing to the support of the cause of God, according to our rules, see 1 Cor. xvi. 2. 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7. He is particularly requested to see that each member in his class has the rules of the society, in order that no one may be ignorant of them, and to read and enforce them in his class *once* in every quarter. He is desired to regulate his class paper in the following manner. If any member of his class be absent at the weekly meeting, he is requested to inquire into the cause, and if the person be distant from home, to place opposite his name a D, if sick, an S, if business

has prevented, a B; if there be reason to conclude it has been neglect, N; and if no reason can be assigned at the time, an A. He is also requested to write the names of those persons who are on trial on the back of his class paper, where they are to remain till the next quarterly visitation; when those who are *then* approved of, may be received as members of the society. No leader is to receive a member from another class without the consent of the preacher and his former leader, nor put any member out of his own class himself.

Stewards and Leaders Meetings.

A steward of the *society* and a *circuit* steward are two distinct offices, and are but seldom in the same hands. But there is no rule against a man's filling both offices at the same time.

The office of a *steward* of the *society*, is to attend the leaders meeting, and there to receive from each leader what class money he has in his hand, to pay the officiating preachers their weekly board, and any other just and commonly allowed demand. At these meetings, the stewards are not only the treasurers, but the secretaries also. They are required to keep regular and just accounts of all monies received by them, and to show their accounts to the superintendent when required. It is the business of the stewards to make the necessary preparations for holding the quarterly meetings and love-feasts, and to take care that none get into the love-feasts, but those who are members of society, or who have notes of admittance from the preachers. Lastly, where the district meeting, or the conference is held, it is the business of the stewards to make the necessary preparations, and to pay all expences incurred by such assemblies, which have not been discharged by the preachers so assembling.

The office of a *circuit* steward is to receive and pay all monies at the quarterly meetings, and to keep a fair account of the whole; to assist in regulating the income and expenditure; to lend what money may be wanted; to pay all proper and allowed demands, together with the travelling expences to and from the

district meetings and conferences; as also to advance a reasonable sum to take the preachers and their families to their new appointments. But it frequently happens, the finances of the circuit are so low, that the stewards cannot advance money for these removals; and in such cases, the deficiencies, as far as judged reasonable, and the funds will allow, are paid at the next conference. But sometimes when a preacher is able, he makes no claim, but bears the loss.

Quarterly Meetings.

A quarterly meeting is composed of the travelling preachers stationed in the circuit where such meeting is held, the stewards of such circuit, the stewards of the different societies in the circuit, and sometimes other particular friends, members of society, who may be invited, or who may wish to attend, are present. There is generally a plain dinner, and, in most places, those who dine pay a shilling, except the preachers, or some poor brother.

The business of the quarterly meeting is, to receive the quarterly income from the stewards of the different societies in the circuit, and to pay the preachers the quarterly allowances for clothes, &c. And also the usual allowances to a married preacher for his wife, his children, and servant. At this meeting also, there are frequently demands for sundry other things. And it is not unusual at these meetings to take into consideration any proposed improvements in the circuit; sometimes the propriety of dividing the circuit, having an additional preacher, or the case of any local preacher in that circuit, who may be proposed as a suitable person to become an itinerant preacher.

The quarterly meeting is also the proper time and place, for changing or re-appointing the circuit stewards. It is the sole and exclusive business of the superintendent to name who he thinks would be proper to fill the office. But if the person so nominated be objected to by the majority of the meeting, he must name another, and should they object again, he must nominate another, till he shall fix upon one whom the majority of the

persons present agree to appoint. And it is agreeable to a rule of the conference, that no steward of a circuit, or of a society, shall continue such more than one year, except re-appointed to the office. And it is recommended, that, as far as practicable, one of the two stewards shall be changed each year.

The money received and paid by the circuit stewards at the quarterly meetings, is raised by the contributions of the different societies at the quarterly renewal of the tickets. There is not only a weekly contribution, but a quarterly contribution also in all the circuits. For distinction sake, the former is often called *class money*, and the latter *ticket money;* not that the tickets are sold, but because it is the rule to contribute one shilling or more, at the time of receiving the quarterly tickets.—The original average contribution was, that each member, taking rich and poor together, should contribute as many *pence weekly*, and as many *shillings quarterly*, as they were in number. And this, when money was more than twice the value it is now; yet many societies do not come up to this; some few, however, do more than this. Had the original average contribution been raised in every circuit, those difficulties and embarrassments, the conference has had so often to contend with had never existed, nor would so many preachers have had to groan under pinching poverty.

Of late years, many quarterly meetings have taken to themselves the authority of discussing the question of what preachers would be proper for their circuit the next year, and who the conference should be requested to send to their circuit. We have, indeed, no positive rule, either for or against this practice; only the preachers are positively required by the conference, not to go out of the quarterly meeting during any of its discussions, see Minutes of 1806. And the conference has equally determined, that no letter shall have any attention paid to it, except it come from the quarterly meeting.

Local Preachers,

Are a very valuable and useful part of the Methodist societies. Many of them labour much; and few of

them ever receive any reward in this world. After being employed six days in their own business, they deny themselves the rest of the Sabbath, and travel a number of miles, preach once or more, and often return home tired and weary. Generally they get a little bodily refreshment, at the expense of the people to whom they preach, and in some cases the hire of the horses which they ride. Yet unenviable as the office is, we do not allow any man to act as a local preacher among us, except he be a member of the society, a man of good sense, who has a competent knowledge of the scriptures in general, and the doctrines of the gospel in particular; unless he be able to speak in public with tolerable ease and readiness; and after due examination, be approved of by the local and travelling preachers in the circuit where he resides. It would be an easy, and not an unpleasant task, to mention many local preachers of great abilities, whose labours would do honour to any community.

A meeting of the local preachers is held in most circuits once in the quarter. The superintendent preacher meets with them. After singing and prayer, inquiry is made respecting the moral character of each; and also if there be any complaints against any of them for preaching unsound doctrines, neglecting to fulfil their appointments, &c.

At these meetings is determined what new places shall be taken into the local preachers' plan, what old places shall be given up, who shall be admitted as local preachers, and who shall be discontinued. The local preachers appointments are regularly planned by the superintendents of the respective circuits. The plan is usually made for six months, and in many circuits is printed and circulated among the people. This description of men have done, and still do much good: and it is to be hoped no impolitic minister under any persecuting influence, will ever attempt to make any restrictive laws against them.

Travelling Preachers.

From among the local preachers are selected those who are appointed to circuits as itinerants. These can-

not *always* be chosen with mere reference to their preaching abilities: for some of the local preachers are not willing to travel and some of them cannot. The embarrassed state of the connexion in respect to pecuniary supplies, obliges the conference to prefer those who are single. But still the greatest care is taken that no improper person be sent to travel. It will be asked what are the general qualifications required in a travelling preacher among the Methodists? To this I answer,

1. Except in some very rare cases, when a minister of the established church, or a dissenting minister, may join us, every person admitted to be a travelling preacher, has been some time a member of our society. But as we neither profess to be omniscient or infallible, there is a possibility the conference may be imposed upon. However I am convinced this does but seldom happen; and when it does, the man is soon unmasked, and discarded. And sometimes even before sufficient time has been allowed for this, he finds the office and employments he has got into, so disagreeable to flesh and blood, that he shapes some excuse and quits the field.

2. It is required that they have a clear and sound understanding. And many of uncommon natural powers, have been, and still are among the itinerant preachers. Indeed, it may readily be allowed, that to speak extempore, upon such subjects, and before such congregations, must require as large a portion of natural endowments, as generally fall to the share of men.

3. It is not a pre-requisite for admission as a preacher among us that a man be what is termed *a scholar*. Yet the Methodists neither despise nor neglect learning. Some of the preachers had much learning, and some had a little, when they became itinerants; and many of them have greatly improved in learning since that time. Yet they can see nothing, either in the scriptures, or in the nature of the employment, that demands that *all* preachers should be learned men. To have *a few* profound scholars may be very convenient and useful on many accounts. But, as much may be learnt and taught in our mother tongue, as any people need to

know, to make them wise unto salvation: though the Methodists do not require that a preacher should understand Latin and Greek, they do require what is infinitely more important, namely, that he should understand the things of God, and that clearly, having a just conception of the analogy of faith, and of the whole plan of salvation. And it is enjoined by rule, that every preacher shall give attendance to *reading* and to *meditation*. They are required,

4. To have a ready utterance. For let a man know whatever he may, his knowledge cannot profit others, any further than he is able to communicate it by words. But,

5. Before we admit a person as a travelling preacher, we inquire "whether he has had any fruit of his labours, during the time he has been a local preacher?" "Whether any sinners have been reformed by his labours?" "Have any of the children of God been edified and built up by his preaching?" "Are his talents of that description as may make him generally useful?"

6. Our rules will not admit of their being sent out. (1.) Till they have been proposed at, and approved by, a majority of the quarterly meeting in the circuit in which they respectively reside.

(2.) The like proposal must be made, and the same sanction obtained at the annual meeting of the district in which their circuit is. Nay more, they must attend the district meeting, and undergo an examination respecting their religious experience, knowledge, motives, sentiments, and their willingness to conform to the rules of our discipline.

(3.) And when at the conference, as is sometimes the case, we have not a sufficient number of persons who have gone through this process, and are obliged to select from among the other local preachers, and put them down for circuits, it is done only provisionally; and subject to a similar process. Though they should be put down for circuits, and their names be printed in the copy of the stations, still they must not go to their circuits till the quarterly meeting has concurred as above-mentioned, and till three superintendent preach-

ers, or three preachers, each of whom shall not have travelled less than ten years, shall have examined them, as others are examined at the district meetings.

(4.) After this, they are employed four years upon trial, before we receive them into full connexion, and admit them to all the privileges of the body. And should any serious doubts arise, at the expiration of these four years, respecting their piety, abilities, or probable usefulness, they will either be dismissed, or have the time of their probation prolonged.

(5.) During the time of their probation they are not allowed to marry: and should they do so, they must not expect the conference to employ them any more. But the conference can dispence with the rule, and allow a person, upon some extraordinary occasion, to marry before the end of the four years. This has been done in a few cases, and but a few.

(6.) If a preacher should become superanuated before the term of his probation be ended, he is not entitled to any annual allowance from the preachers' fund.

The following twelve rules belong to all the preachers, but are particularly denominated, "*The twelve rules of a helper*;" that is, a preacher who does not fill the office of a superintendent.

1. Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time: neither spend any more time at any one place than is strictly necessary.

2. Be serious. Let your motto be Holiness to the Lord. Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.

3. Converse sparingly and cautiously with women; partiularly with young women.

4. Take no step towards marriage without first consulting with some of your brethren.

5. Believe evil of no one; unless you see it done; take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction upon every thing: you know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.

6. Speak evil of no one: else your word especially would eat as doth a canker: keep your thoughts within your own breast, till you come to the person concerned.

7. Tell every one what you think wrong in him, and that plainly, and as soon as may be: else it will fester in your heart.

8. Do not affect the gentleman. You have no more to do with this character, than with that of a dancing-master. A preacher of the gospel is the servant of all.

9. Be ashamed of nothing but sin: not of fetching wood (if time permit), or drawing water: not of cleaning your own shoes, or your neighbour's.

10. Be punctual. Do every thing exactly at the time: and in general, do not *mend* our rules, but *keep* them: not for wrath, but for conscience sake.

11. You have nothing to do but to save souls.—Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most. Observe, it is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this and that society: but to save as many souls as you can, to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness, without which they cannot see the Lord.—And remember! a Methodist preacher is to mind *every* point, great and small, in the Methodist discipline.—Therefore you will need all the sense you have, and to have all your wits about you.

12. Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such it is your duty to employ your time in the manner which we direct: partly in preaching and visiting from house to house: partly in reading, meditation, and prayer. Above all, if you labour with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you should do that *part* of the work which we advise, and at those *times* and *places* which we judge most for his glory.

Respecting these golden rules, it may be proper to observe, "affecting the gentleman," was not designed to countenance clownishness, or any thing contrary to true Christian courtesy. And when it is said, "a preacher of the gospel is the servant of all," it certainly was not meant to insinuate, that a preacher was to be set to do the lowest and most slavish drudgery which

any person could find for him to do. I presume the servant of God is "*the servant of all*" in gospel labours, and in nothing else. And though he may not be ashamed of "cleaning his own shoes, or the shoes of others," yet, I apprehend, they ought to be "ashamed" who would expect or suffer him so to do, especially such as are instructed and profited by his ministerial labours. And surely they ought to feel some shame also, who would suffer the preacher to go from place to place, day after day, with his shoes and boots uncleaned.

And as to what is said in the twelfth rule about doing *that part* of the work, and at *the times* and *places* advised, it is needful to observe, this rule was made in Mr. Wesley's time, and early in Methodism. Mr. Wesley superintended the whole connexion. The preacher in each circuit, to whose care the circuit was committed, was called *the assistant*, because he *assisted* Mr. Wesley in the government of his societies and the preachers. And the other preachers were called *helpers*, because they *helped* the assistants in the general work, though still under his care and direction.—What the spirit of the rule now requires, is, that each superintendent, or the preacher who has the chief care of a circuit, and whose name stands the first in the printed minutes, shall act in subordination to the rules and orders of the conference; and that the other preacher or preachers in the circuit shall act in conformity to his directions, in all their labours, so long as he requires nothing contrary to the rules of the conference. And this is a matter of great importance. Opposition to the superintendent, and forming a party against him, might be productive of very great evils. And for a superintendent to *lord it over* his brethren; capriciously to exercise his delegated authority, or to assume more authority than the conference had conferred upon him, or the bible would warrant, would also be a very injurious and improper thing.

The Office of a Superintendent.

It is, "To see that the other preachers in the cir-

cuit behave well, and want nothing." In other words, he is to watch over the conduct and characters of his helpers, both as Christians and as itinerant Methodist preachers. And he is to use his best endeavours, that all their reasonable wants be supplied, and also the wants of their families, if they have families. It is also the office of the superintendent to make and alter the plan of the circuit, and that both for the local and travelling preachers. And it is chiefly by acting according to *such* a plan, that they do that *part* of the work, and at the *times* and *places* required, in literal conformity to the twelfth rule. It is also the province of the superintendent to fix the order of renewing the society tickets, and to give them all himself, if he be so inclined. But this he seldom does: and in many places it would be very inconvenient and difficult, if not altogether impracticable. The other preachers therefore, take a share: and this has now been sanctioned by long and general custom. It is his business to propose persons for admission into, and exclusion from the society; to propose persons to be admitted as local preachers; to propose new society and circuit stewards; to propose at the quarterly meeting and district meeting, persons to be taken out as travelling preachers. It is his office to fix the time of the love-feasts, and watch-nights; to require the society and circuit stewards to show him how their accounts stand, at least once every year; to send to our book steward for such books as are wanted in his circuit, and to account for them. Also to fix the time, and arrange the methods, with his helpers, for making all the usual collections; viz. that for Kingswood-school, the yearly collection, that for the missions, and that for the preachers' fund. And to account for the money raised by each collection. And if any chapel in his circuit requires a collection in any other circuit or circuits, it is his business to go and make such collection, or prevail upon his helper or helpers to supply his lack of service. It is his business also, upon divers occasions, to meet the trustees of the different chapels, and sometimes to examine their accounts. Also to give certificates, or testimonials, to

persons removing into other circuits. To regulate the bands, and also the meetings of what is called *the body bands*, and also the *select band*. He is to take a list of all the societies in his circuit at the end of each year, and to leave his successor a regular account thereof. To fix the time of the quarterly meetings, and to preside at those meetings. The most important and necessary qualifications for a superintendent, are, That he walk closely with God, and have his work greatly at heart; that he understand and love the Methodist discipline. To these we may add, a thorough knowledge of the history and the doctrines of Methodism, and great self-command will be of great advantage to him in his office. Lastly, he should unite in himself great firmness, great prudence, a peaceable disposition, and genuine piety.

The General Office of a Preacher,

Is, 1. To preach twice or thrice every sabbath-day, and once or twice on each of the week-days. In addition to this he has to travel from place to place in his circuit, sometimes riding and sometimes walking.

2. After he has done preaching in the evening, he frequently meets the society, and delivers such advice as he thinks proper.

Giving of the Tickets.

In December, March, June, and September, the tickets are renewed. And in the large circuits especially, this greatly adds to the preacher's labour, yet it is a work of importance and general advantage to the societies. The tickets are printed at our own press in London, with a text of scripture upon them, which is varied each quarter, and a letter of the alphabet, going regularly through, and then beginning again. Two out of every ten have a small *b* upon them, in addition to the other letter; these are designed to be given to such as meet in band. And are in the following form:

BAND TICKET.

March, 1811.

Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, &c.
Ezek. xxxvi. 31.

S *b*

Tho. Unwin.

CLASS TICKET.

March, 1811.

Turn ye at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my SPIRIT unto you, I will make known my words unto you.
Prov. i. 23.

S

Jos. Cooper.

The tickets are the same each quarter, all over the connexion. At the time of giving the tickets, the preacher sees by the usual marks, whether the members have met well or ill; and if they have not met well, he inquires into the cause. He speaks to each person respecting his or her religious experience, much in the way that a leader speaks to each member in his class. He blots out the names of any who have left the society, or any who have been judged unfit to be continued members; and also sets down the names of new members.

In some places the preacher has to meet the bands, after he has done preaching. A band seldom consists of more than three or four persons. These persons are supposed to be nearly in the same state of grace, or in other words, their attainments in religion are supposed to be nearly equal. And the bands do not consist of men and women together, as in many of the classes, but men only, and women only, are in the bands.

Now the meeting called "*the band*," or "*the body band*," consists of as many persons as belong to any or all the bands in that society. Besides a little time spent in singing and prayer, the rest of the time is employed in speaking their religious experience. At these meetings the people are not spoken to, one by one, as at a class-meeting, but every one speaks, or re-

mains silent, as they are disposed. The officiating preacher presides at the meeting of the bands.

Love-Feasts.

In the principal societies, there is a love-feast every quarter. In many smaller places it is not more than twice, or perhaps only once a year; and in many little places not at all. To get admission into love-feast, the different persons must show the last ticket they received to the person or persons standing at the door, and the ticket must not have been received above three months before. Without this, the door-keepers are not to admit any person. Only, should they have lost or forgotten their tickets, the preacher, upon being applied to, may give them a note of admittance, which they deliver up to the door-keeper.

The preachers also frequently give notes of admittance to some persons who are not members of society, but who may come recommended by a leader, or some other well known and respectable member. We have a positive rule, that no person, not a member of the society, shall be admitted more than once to a love-feast.

The Methodists think, that love-feasts were of apostolic institution. They are mentioned in the 12th verse of the epistle of Jude, "These are spots in your feasts of love," or love-feasts. And some think that the true reading of 2 Pet. ii. 13. is, "Sporting themselves in their love feasts." In modern times, the Moravians and Methodists are the only Christians, at least in this part of the globe, who hold love-feasts.—Among the Moravians, the general refreshment made use of by them, at love feasts, is tea. And upon these occasions they read the accounts of the success of their missions in the different parts of the world. The Methodists, at these meetings, take only bread and water. The love-feast is both begun and ended by singing and prayer; a travelling preacher presiding. The time is chiefly taken up in relating Christian experience. Any person may speak who chooses. They are generally very agreeable, edifying, and refreshing seasons. They tend to promote piety, mutual affection, and zeal. A

collection is made, the first object of which is to pay for the bread used on the occasion; and the surplus is divided among the poor members of the society where the love-feast is held.

Watch-Nights.

It may be proper to give some account of a watch-night. When these are kept according to their original design, and the practice of Mr. Wesley, they do not conclude till midnight. In many places, however, they have of late begun and concluded earlier. A watch-night, that is held till midnight, usually begins about half past eight o'clock. The service consists of a short suituable sermon, and then the rest of the time is occupied in alternate singing and prayer. For this service we have an appropriate set of hymns. However, it is common, in addition to the sermon at the beginning, for some other preacher, or preachers, to give a word of exhortation at intervals. These seasons are generally very solemn and impressive.

Circuits, Districts, and District Meetings.

A *circuit* consists of a number of places, at each of which there is a society. These circuits are sometimes smaller and sometimes larger, in some cases having two, in some three or four, and in some very rare cases, five preachers. In these circuits, the preachers go round according to a fixed plan. In some part of the circuit, where there is the largest society, reside the families of the married preachers. This is termed the head place in the circuit. The whole circuit generally goes by the name of this place. For in naming the circuits in our minutes, we do not mention *all* the places, but only *one* place in a circuit. In some cases, one preacher's family resides at one place, and another at another in the same circuit.

A *district* comprises several circuits, frequently about five or six. In each district, there is a chairman, chosen at the conference, by ballot, after all the names of the preachers in such a district are read over. All the

preachers of the district form a committee. Except in extraordinary occurrences, each committee does meet but once a year, that is, a few weeks before or immediately after the midsummer quarterly meetings. In case any preacher should have any serious accusation brought against him, or any thing very important happening in any circuit in the district, which cannot well be settled without the committee being convened, the chairman fixes the time and place of meeting, and informs each member of the committee accordingly. When trustees, &c. accuse a preacher of immorality, preaching false doctrine, or acting contrary to the rules of discipline, *they* have a power of convening a district meeting, as will be shown in some of the following pages. At these *extraordinary*, and also at the *annual* district meetings, in all disputed cases, a majority of votes is decisive; only all the decisions of the district meetings are laid before the ensuing conference; and there are confirmed, rejected, or modified. The chairman of the district presides at these meetings: and a secretary is chosen by ballot at the time, to record all the determinations, one copy of which is taken to the conference, and another is inscribed in a book kept in each district for the purpose. These meetings hold a day, a day and a half, or two days: seldom more. At these times, there is preaching both evening and morning.

The order of business at the district meetings is: after singing and prayer, the chairman takes the chair to preside, a secretary is immediately chosen, and then we put down the name of each preacher present. This being done, we proceed to inquire,

1. Are there any objections to any of the preachers in this district, as to their morals, the doctrines they preach, and their observance of our rules? Then every preacher's name is pronounced in order, pausing between each, to allow time for objections to be brought forward, if there be any.

2. What preacher in this district has finished his years of probation, and is to be received into full connexion?

3. Who remain on trial? And how long have they travelled? And if any have died the last year, or desist-

ed from travelling, or are to be superannuated, the proper question and answer is now inserted. We then proceed to inquire,

4. What is the amount of the yearly collection? And this being taken down, in detail, we next ask,

5. What are the *ordinary* deficiencies? This includes all deficiencies in the usual allowances for preachers quarterage, quarterly allowance for preachers wives, children, servant, houserent, coals, and candles. These *ordinary* deficiencies are paid to those to whom they are due. At this sitting the stewards of all the circuits in the district are allowed to be present, during both the paying in of the yearly collection, and the payment of the deficiencies.

If the yearly collection amount to more than the deficiencies, the surplus is paid in by the chairman at the conference; and if the deficiencies exceed the amount of the collection, such deficiencies are claimed at the conference.

6. The committee next inquire, what deficiencies of an *extraordinary* nature there are in the district. This includes all demands for removals which were not paid the last year; cases of affliction, that have not been properly attended to in the circuits where they have occurred, through poverty or inattention, &c. Here come in sundries, such as little helps towards furnishing houses for preachers in some poor circuits, and such like things. The district meeting is not allowed to pay any of these *extraordinaries*, though there should be money that would do it. But they are entered in the minutes of the district, and submitted to the decision of the conference. Generally the conference pays the sums proposed by the district meetings, and perhaps would always do so if there was a sufficiency of money.

7. It is asked, what boys, sons of preachers, in this district, are *to go to* Kingswood school? What boys, that *do not go to* the school, are to receive the usual allowance from the collection?

8. What girls, daughters of preachers, in this district, are to receive the allowance from the collection for Kingswood school? And in both cases we put down whether it be 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 years of their receiving

it: because neither boys nor girls receive this for any more than six years.

9. What chapels are to be built in this district the ensuing year?

10. What chapels in this district do we recommend to the conference to allow collections to be made for the ensuing year? and in what circuits? Then if any circuit be proposed to be divided, it is considered and determined upon: only none can be *actually* divided without the sanction of the conference. And now, if we have any new rule to propose to the conference for adoption, or any remarks to make upon any thing in our œconomy, it is brought forward, discussed, and either agreed upon or thrown out. Then, it is asked,

11. Who of us are to attend the conference? This settled, and the names written down.

12. Who is to go as our delegate to the committee for drawing up the rough draft of the stations for the ensuing year? Each sitting of the district committee begins and ends with prayer. The first sitting, each day, is from six o'clock to eight: The second from nine to twelve or after; and the third from two o'clock to near five. And in this the district meeting is an exact resemblance of the stationing committee, and of the conference.

District meetings have authority, 1. To try and *suspend* preachers who are found immoral, erroneous in doctrine, or deficient in abilties. 2. To decide concerning the building of chapels. 3. To examine the demand from the circuits, respecting the support of the preachers and their families. 4. To elect a representative to the committee for preparing a draft of the stations for the ensuing year. But the districts have not authority, 1. To make any new rule. 2. To *expel* a preacher. Nor, 3. To station the preachers. But, at the Bristol conference, 1808, It was agreed, That those preachers, who have completed the usual period of probation, without any complaint being brought against them, and whom their district committee, after a strict examination, shall unanimously recommend, shall be deemed *virtually* received into full connexion, without attending the conference. But they shall be publicly

received at the first conference they can attend afterwards.

In the General Minutes, page 41, it is declared; that "If it appear on just grounds to any superintendent, that the chairman of the district has been guilty of any crime, or that he has neglected to call a meeting of the district, when there were sufficient reasons for calling it, such superintendent shall have authority in that case to call a meeting of the district, and to fix the time and place of meeting. The district meeting thus assembled, shall have power, if they judge necessary, to try the chairman, and if found guilty, to suspend him from being a travelling preacher till the next conference, or to remove him from the office of superintendent, or to depose him from the chair, and to elect another in his place. Minutes shall be taken of their proceedings, which shall be laid before the next conference." This rule has never been either repealed or superseded, and therefore remains in full force.

In the plan of pacification contained in the Minutes of 1795, it will be found; That if the majority of trustees, or of the stewards and leaders of any place, think a preacher to be immoral in his conduct, erroneous in his doctrine, deficient in abilities, or that he has broken some of our rules, they themselves may summon all the preachers of the district to assemble at that place, and that they, and every other trustee, steward, and leader, in that circuit, may assemble with them upon the trial, and every one of these shall have a single vote in deciding on the accused preachers innocence or guilt; being in respect to voting upon a level with every preacher present, except the chairman, who may, when the votes are equal, give the casting vote.

Any preacher refusing to be tried in this way, will subject himself to suspension till the next conference. And in all cases of accusation a preacher may claim the benefit of such a trial.

The Stationing Committee,

Consists of one preacher from every district in England, Scotland, Wales, and the Norman Isles, chosen by bal-

lot at the district meetings. The president of the last conference presides at the meeting of these representatives, who meet five days before the beginning of the conference.

A book is prepared, with the head place in each circuit written down in it, in the same order as in the printed Minutes of our conference, with large spaces between the names of the circuits, for inserting the names of the preachers, who may be thought proper to be appointed thither. This committee weighs well the cases of the circuits and of the preachers. Requests from different circuits, for certain preachers to be appointed for them, are here read, and every inquiry is made, that every place and every preacher may have the most suitable appointment that can be made.—Here a great many considerations of various kinds, are to be weighed and balanced, as well as possible. To suit *every preacher*, according to his views and wishes, and at the same time, to please *every person* among *all* the thousands in our numerous circuits, would be impossible. Petitions for, and remonstrances against certain preachers, create the greatest difficulties this committee has to grapple with. There seems to be no alternative, but either the people must relinquish the benefits of the plan of itinerancy, or leave the fixing of the stations *entirely* to the conference. This committee of delegates is dissolved as soon as the conference begins, and has no right to meet any more but by special order.

The Conferences.

The Conference begins the last Monday in July every year. Its meetings are in London, Sheffield, Leeds, Liverpool, Bristol, and Manchester, in regular succession. The sittings begin at six o'clock in the morning, preaching being each morning at five. As soon as the chapel is cleared of the congregation, the president takes the chair, and gives out a hymn; after prayer the business proceeds. At the first sitting on the first day, we fill up the hundred who constitute the legal conference, according to the deed-poll made by

Mr. Wesley, February 28, 1784, and enrolled in his Majesty's High Court of Chancery. Vacancies, more or fewer, occur every year. The hundred is filled up from the other preachers according to seniority. *The hundred only* vote in the choice of the president and secretary. The election in both cases is done by ballot. The votes being counted, the president of the last conference (who always fills the chair till his successor be chosen) declares who is duly elected, and quits his seat, which the new president takes possession of.—Prayer is then made to God, to entreat him to assist and bless us in the business we have to go through.

We then choose treasurers and clerks for the different collections, viz. the yearly collection, the collection for Kingswood school, and that for the preachers fund. We also choose several committees for the expediting of the business of the conference, viz. 1. A committee to examine and digest the minutes of the district meetings. 2. A committee for book affairs. 3. A committee for the affairs of Kingswood school. 4. A committee to consider our temporal affairs, and devise ways and means, so that the expenditure may not exceed the income. 5. A committee to arrange the plan of collecting for chapels. 6. A committee for missions.

This part of our preliminary business being settled, we proceed to inquire and determine,

1. What preachers are admitted into full connexion?

The manner of receiving preachers into full connexion at the conference, I must observe is very interesting.

In Mr. Wesley's life-time the preachers were not received in public, as they are now. But the present plan is an improvement. Scarcely any thing so much attracts public notice, or causes such deep attention, as this public act. The president takes his station in the pulpit; and those who are to be received into full connexion, are placed in the front seat of the gallery, facing him. He then addresses each by name. The questions asked of each, relate to their religious experience, the doctrines they believe, and their willingness to regulate their conduct by our rules, and to enforce these upon the societies where they may labour.

Some of them speak largely upon these subjects, and especially as to the manner of their conversion, and how they were brought to undertake the office of a preacher. These seasons are very pleasing and edifying to the congregation, and tend to promote pious zeal.

2. Who remain on trial? At the same time specifying how long each one has travelled.

3. Who are admitted on trial?

4. What travelling preachers have died during the last year?

5. Are there any objections to any of the preachers?

Every preacher's name is then called, and time given for objections to be produced; while the question is asked respecting each preacher in order. But it may be observed, that the district meeting is now the principle place for the examination of characters. Hence the old form of doing this at the conference, might perhaps be dispensed with.

The districts might be taken in order, and each chairman be called upon to read that part of the Minutes of his district meeting which relates to the characters. To this, in some cases, additional inquiry might be made, whether any thing had transpired since the meeting of the district committee, which required the consideration of the conference. This plan would be more consonant to reason, and the general usages of men, and would save a considerable portion of our best time. When the old method of calling over every preachers name was instituted, and for almost half a century after, we had no district meetings. Consequently, the conference was the only time for the proper examination of the preachers characters.—But this observation is merely my own private opinion.

If any be expelled by the vote of the conference, or desist by their own choice, their names are mentioned in answer to the next question, viz.

6. Who have desisted from travelling?

7. How are the preachers stationed this year? The stations are then read, to which every one pays the greatest attention.

The next questions are; How many preachers wives are to be provided for, and by what circuits?

What members are there in the society?

Then comes on the consideration of the new regulations proposed by the different district meetings, as recorded in their respective minutes. And now, the committee appointed to read, arrange, and digest the whole, come forward and read their papers. Some part, perhaps the chief of the extracts are proposed to become the standing rules of the connexion. If there be any difference of opinion as to the propriety of this, it is put to vote, and a majority of the conference determine which way it shall be.

The various committees bring in their reports, and among the rest, the committee appointed to determine what collections for chapels shall be made the ensuing year, and in what circuits.

Our book-steward appears with his accounts, and details the present state of the concern, and specifies how much money he can spare us to add to the yearly collection, towards paying those parts of the *ordinary deficiencies* which were not paid at the different district meetings; also the *extraordinary deficiencies* recommended by the districts; and lastly any expenses of removals, &c. which could not be ascertained at the time the district meetings met. This is often a time of trial, especially to some of the poorer brethren, who it may be, have little debts to discharge, and to start upon a journey, and sometimes a long one, to a new circuit, with a pocket nearly empty.

Now come on miscellaneous matters, such as addresses from societies or individuals, on peculiar subjects; the address from the Irish conference; the state of Kingswood school, and various other things.

I mentioned p. 243, that it was one business of the district meetings to determine *who should attend the conference*. As far as circumstances will admit, no circuit is left destitute of at least one travelling preacher during the conference. Every member of the conference, as defined by Mr. Wesley's Deed of Declaration, and also every superintendent, has a right to attend the conference, without being authorized by the committees of the districts. But excepting these, no one ought to go

to the conference without the consent of his district meeting.

Then, and at other times, certain alterations will be proposed and made in the stations of the preachers.—At last, the conference breaks up, amidst the exercises of prayer and praise, and mutual and affectionate farewells. And perhaps no instance ever happens that they *all* live to meet again. Some have to go fifty, a hundred, two hundred, some three, or four hundred, miles, to their families, to pack up their books and clothes, and depart to circuits they know but little about; but in most places they meet with an affectionate reception. The *people* ought to get great good from the constant change of the preachers; for to the *preachers* it is productive of many inconveniences and painful exercises.

Preachers Salaries.

While a travelling preacher endures all this labour and toil, mingled with these trials, and many more, what pecuniary reward does he get? *What sums of money does he receive?*

1. In most circuits a weekly board is allowed by the society among whom the preacher's family lives. In some few places this is very good; in some but middling; and in too many very small. There is no fixed standard for this allowance; and the variations are so numerous, that it might be improper to mention any specific sum.

2. He receives 16*l.* 16*s.* per annum, to buy clothes and books, &c. for himself.

4. A married preacher receives 16*l.* 16*s.* towards the support of his wife, and to furnish her with clothes, &c.

5. He receives from 8 to 10*l.* *towards* the board and wages of a servant. But this may be termed a gratuity.

6. He is allowed 6*l.* 6*s.* a year to feed and clothe each of his children. Till very lately the annual allowance was only 4*l.*

It is proper, and perhaps necessary to remark, that a Methodist preacher does not make any agreement for any fixed salary, with the people among whom he la-

bours; that what he receives is raised by voluntary contributions; and that if the stewards should at any time withhold from him any part, or even the whole of his usual allowances, he has no redress in law. On these accounts, I am fully of opinion, his income is not taxable. It is not in either the letter or spirit of the law respecting income, to tax voluntary contributions or donations.

The reader will observe, the preacher has the above allowances so long as he is "*strong to labour.*" But when he is no longer able to do the work, which none are fully adequate to but men in health and vigour, he finds himself in circumstances far less comfortable. A clergyman of the Church of England, or a dissenting minister, however incapaciated for labour, enjoys his salary to the end of life. With a Methodist preacher it is not so. When no longer able to do the work of a circuit, his quarterage, board, &c. ceases.* It is certain, however, that a man in the decline of life, especially a debilitated man, needs an increase, rather than a diminution of income.

The Preachers Fund.

The chief dependence of a worn-out preacher, under God, is on the preachers fund. Each man subscribing a guinea annually, a little fund is raised, out of which every worn-out preacher receives a small annuity.—And when the man is in *very necessitous* circumstances, something more than the fixed annuity may be allowed, from what is so generously contributed to the preachers fund, by some of our more wealthy and liberal people in different parts of the connexion.

1. Every travelling preacher, in full connexion who is declared to be supernumerary, or *superannuated*, by the conference, shall receive from the preachers fund the sum of twenty-four guineas per annum, the payment to be made every six months, and to commence from the time he is superannuated, or made a supernumerary.

2. Should he die and leave a widow, such widow shall receive an annuity of twenty-four guineas, under certain regulations hereafter to be mentioned.

* This is not the case in America.

3. Every annuitant shall subscribe one guinea annually to the support of the fund, at the time of the conference.

4. No preacher shall be considered as a supernumerary or superannuated preacher, except declared such by the conference, after being satisfactorily convinced of his labouring under some bodily or mental infirmity, which unfits him for the labours of a circuit.

5. If any preacher, above fifty-five years of age, marry a woman under forty, she shall not, when left his widow, have any benefit from this fund.

6. A preacher, expelled by the conference, or who shall voluntarily desist from travelling, or if worn out, shall not continue a member of the Methodist society, shall be excluded from all benefits arising from this fund, and forfeit what he has paid to it.

7. Every member admitted into this fund, shall pay five guineas upon his admission.

8. Every preacher who has travelled twenty years in this connexion shall, on being superannuated, or made a supernumerary, be entitled to thirty guineas per annum, in half yearly payments. But let it be observed, That the widow of any preacher, married to him after he had travelled *twenty years*, shall not be entitled to the annuity of *thirty guineas*, till she shall have paid ten guineas into this fund, above what her husband had paid; but she will be permitted to pay these ten guineas by instalments of two or more guineas per annum, above her annual subscription of one guinea.

9. If any preacher die before he shall have travelled *ten years*, his widow shall not be entitled to the annuity of *twenty-four guineas*, till she shall have paid *ten guineas* into this fund, only she may be allowed to pay it by instalments, as in the preceding rule.

This fund, thus raised by the subscriptions of the preachers, and thus regulated by them, is distinct and separate from that raised by the subscriptions of the people. This latter is devoted to cases of particular distress. But if any thing should remain after relieving these, it is then given to the other fund. This is just, as many people subscribe to the preachers fund, under a general idea, without knowing any thing about the

above distinction, and who would specifically subscribe to what is called the legalized fund were they solicited. It should be remarked, that a man may be superannuated, who may have a wife, and some children too old to be entitled to any allowance. Yea, this may be the case, and some times is so, when he is entitled to only *twenty-four guineas* a year. With this he must retire, and pay house-rent, and find food and raiment for his family and himself. Again, a widow may be left with children who receive no allowance, to subsist upon the same sum.

The General Collections.

While I am upon the subject of money-matters, I will detail the particulars of all the general collections made among the Methodists.

The weekly collections made in classes is applied to pay the preachers board, and to other incidental expenses; all the particulars of which are regularly entered in the stewards books.

The collections made at sacraments and love-feasts, are *solely* applied to the relief of the sick, and poor members of the society, after the expenses of bread and wine are paid.

The quarterly contribution in the classes, when the tickets are given, is applied to pay the preachers quarterage, with that of their wives and children, servants allowance, and travelling expenses in the circuit.

The quarterly collection made in the chapels is added to the weekly and quarterly contributions, without which, in many places, the work of God could not be supported. On these occasions, our respectable friends who are not in society, have an opportunity of contributing to the support of that ministry by which they are edified.

Collection for Kingswood School.

In November, according to a late rule of conference, we make a public collection for Kingswood school, which is about three miles from Bristol. This school

was erected by Mr. Wesley, and opened in 1748. He designed it to be a school for the children of the Methodists in general, as well as for the children of the preachers. It was employed in this way for some years. But in process of time, it was wholly appropriated to the education of the sons of our itinerant preachers. But as the daughters are equally dependent on their parents, it is deemed equitable, that they should have some allowance from the collection made for the support of that institution, during the same number of years the boys are allowed to receive their education, board, and clothes *gratis*, at the school. The term in both cases is for six years.

And since the preachers are so increased in number, and their children in proportion, the school is not capable of receiving all the boys. Besides, some of them are at a vast distance, and it would cost much to take them thither. There are other reasons, of weight, at least with parents, which make them wish to have their children near them. Accordingly, it is allowed, when a preacher's son, of the proper age, does not go to the school, the parents shall receive twelve pounds a year towards clothing, and educating him. And this is a real saving to the school and to the collection, but a loss to the preacher. This school is entirely supported by the public annual collection. The children are taught reading, writing, accounts, together with the ancient and foreign languages. But a school, the oldest scholar at which, is not above fourteen years of age, cannot be expected to turn out many scholars of vast literary attainments. Yet several might be mentioned to their own honour and that of the school. A good foundation may be laid, and frequently is, at this school. And the conference in 1808, made a rule, that a boy displaying an uncommon aptitude for learning, should be permitted to stay at the school a year longer than the usual term. One of Mr. Wesley's rules for this school was, "That the children must never play; and that a master must always be with them."

Yearly Subscription.

At the meeting of the classes, once a year, we mention to each class, what we call "*The Yearly Subscription.*" There is a column on purpose for the entrance of this, on the right hand side of every printed class paper. In this column we note down what each one proposes to give. We do not receive it at the time, but rather desire the leader to collect it in about six weeks, that two collections may not be too near the same time. The uses to which this collection is applied are various. In some few very poor circuits, the preachers can hardly get their food and raiment. In some other circuits, though they get their food and raiment, if one of them should have a wife, he cannot get the usual allowances for her. Some other circuits have two preachers wives and families in them, and can only do for one, or for one and a part of the other. And in some circuits, there are three families, when the circuit only supports two. In many circuits they support all the families they have, except in some few, particularly. Affliction sometimes seizes a preacher, or some part of his family, the expenses of which cannot be borne by the circuit in which he is stationed. And there are some long and unavoidable removals; the expenses of which are not, and cannot be borne by the circuit he goes from. Otherwise it is our rule, that the circuit in which the preacher was last, shall pay his expenses to his next appointment. It is an essential part of the office of a circuit steward to see to this. For, it is not reasonable that a preacher and his family should make long removals at his own expense. "Who goeth a warfare at his own charge?" Indeed in divers cases they could not raise money for this. All deficiencies, in these cases, are paid out of the yearly subscription, at the district meetings and at the conference: that is, as far as this collection will go in doing this. Sometimes it will hardly defray half the demands. We add to it all the profits of our book trade, and then pay all deficiencies as far as the whole will go. And after all, the conference sometimes breaks up much in debt. And whoever considers the vast number of the preachers, and

the very considerable number of families belonging to them, and the many contingent expenses inevitably arising out of the itinerant plan, need not wonder at what I say. Rather, upon due consideration, he may justly wonder that the deficiencies are not greater.

Collection for the Missions.

Sometime in the year, we make a collection for the foreign and home missions. The foreign missions include those to the British dominions in North America, Newfoundland, the West-Indies, and Gibraltar. These are very expensive, were it only on account of the high price of their passage to and fro, especially in time of war. And so many preachers dying in the West India islands increases the expense, as others are sent to supply their places. The success, however, has been abundant, and the money has been gloriously laid out. O blessed charity! assisting to save souls from sin and hell!

The home missions, properly speaking, include those among the poor benighted Roman catholics in Ireland, those in Wales, who preach in Welsh, and those in different dark, neglected, and very wicked parts of England. Great good has been done by each of these missions; and every Christian, who has ability, ought to be truly thankful for an opportunity of showing his love to God and man, by assisting to promote them. The mission collection is sometimes made in public, sometimes in private, and sometimes both ways: whereas the yearly subscription has hitherto been made only in private, in the classes; and the collection for Kingswood school is made only in public.

The Subscription to the Preachers Fund.

Each year, just before we set off for the conference, we make in private the subscription for the preachers fund. But we do not mention this to the people in general, as we do the yearly subscription, but confine it chiefly to a few of the more wealthy and liberal. Many give to it both liberally and cheerfully. This collec-

tion is laid out, in allowing annuities to those worn-out preachers and their widows, who never were members of the new legalized fund; and in extra relief to those who belong to the new fund, but who labour under greater indigence and embarrassments than can be sufficiently relieved by it. These cases are numerous, and often call for prompt and bountiful relief. And can there be a greater charity, than succouring a feeble worn-out minister of Christ, who has spent his health and strength in the service of God and his church; or than displaying our affectionate and grateful remembrance of such a man, by showing kindness to his disconsolate widow? Many of these widows made great sacrifices in becoming the wives of preachers, and have passed through many trials during *their* itinerant life.

Trustees.

There is one description of persons among us whom I have not yet found an opportunity of noticing in this work: I mean *trustees*.

When Mr. Wesley was erecting his first preaching-house, he was ignorant, it seems, of the best mode of settling it. It was long called the New-Room, but now the Old Room, in the Horse-fair, Bristol. He at first settled it on eleven feoffees, but being convinced by a letter from Mr. Whitefield, that, as these men had the power of appointing the preachers, they could turn even him out, if what he said and did should not please them, he called them together, told them the error he had committed, and with their consent cancelled the writings, and took the whole management of the building into his own hands. But after some time, he got the form of a trust deed drawn up by three eminent counsellors, for the proper settlement of the chapels. And it is this form, with such additions as circumstances have rendered necessary, which still continues of general use among us.* It will be seen by the form, that the trustees of our chapels are not *proprietors* of them, but put in trust to see that the chapels remain unaliena-

* See page 70, large minutes.

ted from their original purpose. They are put in trust to permit such persons as the conference shall send to preach in the chapels for which they are trustees; in *trust*, to take proper care that *no other*, persons preach in such chapels; and in *trust* to interfere in case any preacher should not preach the true Methodist doctrines, though sent by the conference. They have power to choose from among themselves a steward, a treasurer, &c. to receive all seat-rents, and to make a proper application of the money. In case of necessity, they have power to mortgage the premises, till the debt be paid off. And if it should be determined to build a more convenient one, they may sell the former chapel, and apply the money towards the new chapel.

It may be proper to say something about settling chapels on "the conference plan." This subject has often been misrepresented, and has frequently been a source of contention. But the settling of a chapel on what is called the conference plan, amounts to nothing more than this, that the chapel shall not be the private property of the trustees; and that if any of these trustees should change their sentiments, or from any other cause, should be inclined to give the occupation of the chapel to some other party of professors of religion, they shall not have power so to do. The conference have never attempted to get any chapel made over to them, only so as to secure it in perpetuity for the purpose for which it was built. The members of the conference do not claim any property in any chapel; they claim no share of the seat-rents; nor do they pretend to sell, or otherwise dispose of these chapels. And they think the settlement they contend for just and fair. It has been chiefly owing to the labours of the preachers belonging to the conference that these chapels have been erected. Most, if not all the subscriptions which have been voluntarily contributed towards erecting these buildings, have been given under the idea that they were always to be used according to the first intention. The trustees are under no subjection to the preachers. No man need become a trustee but by his own choice: every trustee may refuse to act as such whenever he chooses; the preachers cannot compel the trustees to ex-

pend any part of the monies arising from the seats in any particular manner whatsoever, but as the deed directs; and though the trustees are frequently under the necessity of signing securities for monies borrowed on the chapels, yet there has not been a single instance since the commencement of Methodism, of any trustee, or his heirs at law, sustaining loss in consequence of this. When difficulties have occurred which could not otherwise be got over, the conference has directed collections to be made in different circuits for their relief. But should they not be relieved, it is provided for in the trust deeds, that they may mortgage the chapel, till the debt can be paid off.

On several accounts, the trustees of the Methodists chapels, as a body, are a most respectable description of men. And to convince them fully of the esteem and confidence of the preachers, the conference, held in 1794, decreed, that "No trustee, however accused, or defective, in conforming to the established rules, shall be removed from the society unless his crime be proved in the presence of the trustees and leaders."

The following rules should be attended to in the building of chapels.—None ought to be built without the approbation of the superintendent; and he should mention it to the next district meeting, get it recorded in the minutes of the district, that it may be printed in the minutes of the following conference. It was made a rule many years since, that no chapel should be built, except two-thirds of the expense were previously subscribed. But this rule has not been well observed.—Perhaps it cannot, with propriety, be conformed to in all cases. However, great care should be taken, that chapels be not involved in insupportable debts. And it would prevent many unpleasant things, if the trust deeds were executed before, or at least soon after the buildings are begun.

The great outlines, and proper form of a trust deed for one of our chapels, is as follows:—"This indenture made in the —— year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, &c. and in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hun-

dred and —— between A. B. of C. in the county of D. of the one part, and F. G. H. I. J. K, &c. of the other part, witnesseth, That in consideration of the sum of five shillings of lawful money of Great Britain, by the said F. G. H. I. J. K. to the said A. B. truly paid before the sealing and delivering hereof, the receipt whereof the said A. B. doth hereby acknowledge, and for divers considerations thereunto moving, the said A. B. hath granted, bargained, and sold, and by these presents doth bargain and sell, unto the said F. G. H. I. J. K. &c. and their executors, administrators, and assigns, all that lately erected house or tenement, known by the name of the Methodist chapel, situated in —— aforesaid, together with all the ways, drains, and privileges to the said premises appertaining, and all the profits therof, with all the right, title, and interest in law and equity, to have and to hold the said chapels and other premises to the said F. G. H. I. J. K. &c. and their assigns for ever. Nevertheless, upon special trust and confidence, and to the intent that they and the survivors of them, and the trustees for the time being, do and shall permit from time to time, and at all times for ever, such persons as shall be appointed at the yearly conference of the people called Methodists, held in London, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield, or Liverpool, or elsewhere, specified by name in a deed, enrolled in Chancery, under the hand and seal of the Rev. John Wesley, and bearing date the 28th day of February, 1784, and no others, to have and to enjoy the said premises, in order that they may therein preach and expound God's holy word, and perform all other acts of religious worship. Provided that the persons so appointed, preach no other doctrines than are contained in Mr. Wesley's notes upon the New Testament, and his four volumes of sermons, by him published. Provided also that the same preacher shall not be sent to the said chapel, for more than two years successively, without the consent of the said trustees given in writing. That the trustees shall have full power to choose from among themselves, a steward, or treasurer, who shall receive all the seat-rents, &c. which money so received, shall be applied towards paying the interests of

all monies due upon the premises, for repairs of the said chapel, and towards reducing the principal till the whole be paid. That in case of necessity, the said trustees shall have full power to mortgage the premises, till the debt contracted be fully discharged. Or, if the Methodist society in that place should be dissolved, or come to nothing, or if a larger or more convenient chapel should be wanting, then in either of the afore-mentioned cases, the trustees for the time being, shall have full power to sell the premises, and in the latter case, shall dispose of the purchase-money towards building another chapel.

In witness whereof, the said A. B. hath hereunto set his hand and seal, &c."

The Committee for guarding our Privileges.

This committee was first appointed at the conference held in 1803. In the minutes of that conference, page 30, it is asked, "How may we guard our privileges in these critical times?" Ans "A committee of ten shall be formed to attend on this important business." The purposes for which this committee was instituted were various. In some places, our congregations had been disturbed by riotous mobs, and it was deemed necessary to seek redress by law. But proceedings at law require judgment and prudence. And that we might enjoy the benefit of these, the conference directed that this committee should be consulted previously to the commencement of any law-suit, and that if any law-suit should be commenced without its approbation, the connexion should not be responsible for the expenses incurred by it.

It was appointed also to watch against any attempts to abridge our privileges by any Act of Parliament.—The *training-bill* was passed about this time; and had it not been for the exertions of this committee, our people might have been compelled to learn the military exercise on the Sabbath, and even our travelling preachers might have been put under the instructions of a drill-sergeant. It is true, this committee has not always done all that might have been expected from

it; but at present it bids fair to render most important service to the connexion, by its laudable, judicious, and spirited exertions. The committee is appointed annually; and that appointed at the conference 1810, consists of the Rev. Dr. Coke, George Wolff, Esq. Christopher Sundius, Esq. William Marriott, Esq. Mr. Joseph Butterworth, Mr. Robert Middleton, Mr. Joseph Bulmer, Mr. Lancelot Haslope, Mr. William Jerram, Mr. Thomas Allan; all the preachers appointed for the two London circuits; Thomas Thompson, Esq. M. P. of Hull; Thomas Holy, Esq. of Sheffield; Mr. John Ward, jun. of Durham: Mr. George Lomas, of Manchester; Mr. Joseph Dutton, of Liverpool; Mr. James Ewer, of Bristol, and Samuel Popplewell, Esq. of Harwood, near Leeds.

Supplement.

As there are divers other particulars relating to the discipline of the Methodists, but which I could not well bring under any of the foregoing heads, (and I wished as far as possible to pursue a regular plan,) I shall now gather up a *selection* of the fragments that remain.

No travelling or local preacher, trustee, steward, or leader, shall disturb the peace of a society, by speaking for or against the introduction of the Lord's Supper in our societies; or the old or new plan, so called.—Should they do so, they shall be subject to the trial and penalties before-mentioned, 1795.

No preacher shall be required to administer the Lord's Supper against his own mind. And should it be allowed by the conference, where all the preachers of the circuit are unwilling to administer it, the superintendent shall invite a suitable preacher from a neighbouring circuit to give it. General Minutes, page 56.

Any *new rule*, made to bind the societies at large, if objected to at the next quarterly-meeting, in any circuit, the major part present, and also the preachers, thinking the observance of such rule would be injurious to that circuit, it shall not be enforced that year. But should a *second* conference confirm the rule, it will then be binding upon the whole connexion. In such

disputed cases, only peaceful methods shall be pursued, 1797.

Mr. Wesley's deed of declaration requires that no preacher shall be stationed in the same circuit for more than three years together, except a clergyman of the church of England. But by a resolution of the conference, it is determined that no preacher shall be stationed in the same circuit for more than *two* years together, except in certain special cases. And, by another resolution of conference, it is determined, that no preacher shall be re-appointed to any circuit, till he shall have been eight years away from it, 1799 and 1807.

It was also fixed by the conference, that no president shall be chosen again to that office in less than eight years.

A member of our society removing into some other circuit, is not to be received into any other society, unless he take with him a certificate from the superintendent, in these words, "A. B. the bearer is now a member of our society, in ——— I believe he has a sufficient cause for removing."

Let us disperse the "Word to a Smuggler;" expel all who do not leave off smuggling; and silence every preacher who attempts to defend it, 1768.

No person shall be continued a member of our society, who learns, or performs, the military exercise, as a *volunteer*, on the Lord's-day. But, meeting on the parade in order to attend divine service, shall not be considered an infringement of this rule. And any person shall be excluded our society, who, after proper admonition, will, on the Lord's-day, continue a spectator of the exercise of the volunteers, 1782.

In general, *women* ought not to preach among us.—(1.) Because a vast majority of our people are opposed to it. (2.) Because their preaching does not seem necessary, there being a sufficiency of preachers, whom God has accredited, to supply all the places in our connexion with regular preaching. But if any woman among us think she has an extraordinary call from God to speak in public, (and we are sure it must be an *extraordinary* call that can authorize it,) we are of opinion that she should in general, address her *own sex*,

and *those only*. And upon this condition alone, should any woman be permitted to preach in any part of our connexion, and when so permitted, it should be under the following regulations.

1. They shall not preach in the circuit where they reside, until they have obtained the approbation of the superintendent and a quarterly-meeting.

2. Before they go into any other circuit to preach, they shall have a *written* invitation from the superintendent of such circuit, and a recommendatory note from the superintendent of their own circuit, 1803.

A preacher going on a mission to the West-Indies, or the British dominions in North America, is not to return home in less than six years. But should his health require it, he may pay a visit to the United States, or the island of Bermuda, Nova-Scotia, or New-Brunswick, 1802.

If any member of our society apply to the quarter-sessions for a license to preach, without being approved of as a preacher, at the quarterly-meeting, as expressed by the seventh section of the general minutes, he shall be expelled from our society. And if any person may have already obtained a license, contrary to the above resolution, and attempt to claim exemption from parish offices, &c. by virtue of such license, such person shall be expelled from the society.

The regularly appointed *local preachers*, though a respectable and useful body of men, are not wholly set apart for the ministry, and therefore it is not consistent with the *spirit* of the act of toleration, that they should claim any advantage in point of exemption from offices, &c. because they are licensed, 1803 and 1809.

Let the sums necessary to afford the usual allowance to the preachers children, be furnished by the several circuits on a regular and equitable plan: and in order to this, let the children in future be stationed on the circuits as well as the wives, 1804 and 1809.

No person shall be permitted to receive the Lord's Supper among us, who is not a member of our society, without a note from the superintendent, which note must be renewed quarterly, 1805.

No preacher shall marry during the time of his proba-

tion; but when is that probation to be considered as terminated? When he is received into full connexion, either formally at the conference, or virtually, by being so entered on our minutes, 1806. Or, after being received into full connexion at the district-meetings, 1808.

Every local preacher shall meet in class, and conform to all our rules of discipline. In this respect, let none be excused. Let no local preacher keep love-feasts, without the consent of the superintendent, nor in any wise interfere with the business of the superintendent. Let every one keep his own place, and attend to the duties of his station. General Minutes, page 13 and 14.

Every preacher shall be considered as a supernumerary, for four years after he is no longer able to take a circuit, and after that, shall be deemed superannuated. *Ibid.* page 55.

Every superintendent shall be at liberty to attend the conference or not. But in case of absence, he shall send all necessary papers by the representative of his district. *Ibid.* page 55.

No circuit shall be divided without the consent of the quarterly-meeting, the district-meeting, the committee of delegates, and the conference. *Ibid.* page 55.

Every preacher, prior to his being admitted into full connexion, shall write an account of his life, and give it to the editor of our books. *Ibid.* page 56.

At the conference, all letters not directed to, or belonging to the president, or the committee of delegates, are to be paid for by the circuits from which the preachers come. And the keeping of all the horses are to be paid for in the same way. *Ibid.* page 56.

The Book-Trade.

It may be proper in this place, to give some account of the book-trade, which originated with Mr. Wesley. He published many books of his own composition, besides those which he extracted from other authors. I have mentioned before, how the profits of these publications were disposed of, so that when he died he had little

more than his clothes and his books. His books consisted partly of his own private library, and partly the stock which he had upon sale, in the book-room, together with a printing-office, types, printing-presses, &c.

These books, and printing materials, constituted the chief subjects of his last will and testament, of which I here insert a complete copy. What those books were, the reader will best learn from the catalogue of the books now sold under the authority and direction of the conference: a copy of which follows Mr. Wesley's will. But those books which have been published since Mr. Wesley's death, I have distinguished by a * in the margin. Our sale of books is much enlarged, which may be accounted for by the increase of our societies. But the whole of the profits are appropriated to the support of the gospel. Our book-trade is not the private property of any man. And those who have the trouble of conducting it, receive nothing but their wages for their labour. The preachers, who are the chief venders of our books, in the different circuits, have less than half the common allowance made to booksellers for their trouble. Considering the vast quantity of books sold by the agents of the conference, the smallness of the commission generally allowed for selling them, and how remarkably little is lost by *bad debts*; it is easy to see that the book-room must afford considerable pecuniary aid to the connexion. But, whatever profits are derived from it, they are applied to help the poorer circuits, to relieve the distresses of the preachers and their families, and in evangelizing the inhabitants of the British empire. While it is an institution, calculated to do the greatest good, in diffusing religious and useful instruction: it is, as it respects the profit of it, one of the noblest charities, and produces a fund of the most beneficial description.

For the better management of the book-concern, the conference appoints "*the book-committee.*" It consists of the editor, the book-steward, and all the preachers stationed in London, for the time being. This committee when met, determines when a new edition of any of the books belonging to the conference shall be printed; when the price of any of them shall be rais-

ed; when any new work, which may be offered in manuscript, shall be accepted and printed; and, in short, all matters relating to the book-trade.

Mr. Wesley's last Will and Testament.

In the name of God, Amen!

I John Wesley, clerk, sometime Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, revoking all others, appoint this to be my last Will and Testament.

I give all my books now on sale, and the copies of them (only subject to a rent charge of 35*l.* a year, to the widow and children of my brother*), to my faithful friends, John Horton, merchant, George Wolff, merchant and William Marriot, stock-broker, all of London, in trust, for the general fund of the Methodist conference in carrying on the work of God, by itinerant preachers: on condition that they permit the following committee, Thomas Coke, James Creighton, Peard Dickinson, Thomas Rankin, George Whitefield, and the London assistant for the time being, still to superintend the printing-press, and to employ Hannah Paramore and George Paramore, as heretofore, unless four of the committee, judge a change to be needful.

I give the books, furniture, and whatever else belongs to me in the three houses at Kingswood, in trust to Thomas Coke, Alexander Mather, and Henry Moore, to be still employed in teaching and maintaining the children of poor travelling preachers.

I give to Thomas Coke, Doctor John Whitehead, and Henry Moore, all the books which are in my study and bedchamber at London, and in my studies elsewhere, in trust for the use of the preachers who shall labour there from time to time.

I give my coins, and whatever else is found in the drawer of my bureau at London, to my dear grand-daughters Mary and Jane Smith.

I give all my manuscripts to Thomas Coke, Doctor Whitehead, and Henry Moore, to be burnt or published, as they see good.

* It was found upon inquiry that the principle sum due was 1600*l*

I give whatever money remains in my bureau and pockets at my decease, to be equally divided between Thomas Briscoe, William Collins, John Easton, and Isaac Brown.

I desire my gowns, cassocks, sashes, and bands, may remain at the chapel for the use of the clergyman attending there.

I desire the London assistant for the time being, to divide the rest of my wearing apparel between those four of the travelling preachers that want it most; only my pellise I give to the Rev. Mr. Creighton: my watch to my friend Joseph Bradford, my gold seal to Eliz. Ritchie.

I give my chaise and horses to James Ward and Charles Wheeler, in trust, to be sold, and the money to be divided, one half to Hannah Abbott, and the other to the poor members of the select society.

Out of the first money which arises from the sale of books, I bequeath to my dear sister Martha Hall, (if alive) 40*l.* to Mr. Creighton aforesaid, 40*l.* and to the Rev. Mr. Heath 60*l.*

And whereas I am empowered, by a late deed, to name the persons who are to preach in the New-Chapel at London (the clergyman for a continuance) and by another deed, to name a committee for appointing preachers in the New Chapel at Bath, I do hereby appoint John Richardson, Thomas Coke, James Creighton, Peard Dickinson, clerks, Alexander Mather, William Thompson, Henry Moore, Andrew Blair, John Valton, Joseph Bradford, James Rogers, and William Myles, to preach in the New-Chapel at London, and to be the committee for appointing preachers in the New-Chapel at Bath.

I likewise appoint Henry Brooke, painter, Arthur Keen, Gent. and William Whitestone, Stationer, all of Dublin, to receive the annuity of 5*l.* (English) left to Kingswood School by the late Roger Shield, Esq.

I give 6*l.* to be divided among the six poor men, named by the assistant, who shall carry my body to the grave; for I particularly desire there may be no hearse, no coach, no escutcheon, no pomp, except the tears of them that loved me, and are following me to Abraham's

bosom. I solemnly adjure my executors in the name of God, punctually to observe this.

Lastly, I give to each of those travelling preachers who shall remain in the connexion six months after my decease, as a little token of my love, the eight volumes of sermons.

I appoint John Horton, George Wolff, and William Marriot, aforesaid, to be executors of this my last Will and Testament, for which trouble they will receive no recompence till the resurrection of the just.

Witness my hand and seal, the 20th day of February, 1789. JOHN WESLEY, (Seal)

Signed, sealed, and delivered by the said testator as for his last Will and Testament, in the presence of us.

WILLIAM CLULOW.
ELIZABETH CLULOW.

Should there be any part of my personal estate undisposed of by this my will: I give the same unto my two neices E. Ellison, and S. Collett, equally.

JOHN WESLEY.

WILLIAM CLULOW.
ELIZABETH CLULOW.

Feb. 25, 1789.

I give my types, printing-presses and every thing pertaining thereto, to Mr. Thomas Rankin, and Mr. George Whitefield, in trust for the use of the conference.

JOHN WESLEY.

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except what fell within the circle of their acquaintance. No general calculation can be exact. But after some attention to the subject, I think, upon an average, we may reckon five chapels to every two travelling preachers. This calculation includes smaller as well as larger chapels, and hence I conclude we must have not less than fifteen or sixteen hundred chapels. And this consideraton alone, ought to plead very forcibly against any attempt to break in upon our order, or to abridge our present liberties, by any new restrictive law. And should an indemnification be offered for our chapels, who can indemnify us for the loss of our religion and our souls. The great number of chapels, above that of travelling preachers, show also the great necessity and importance of the local preachers. They are not only our fellow-helpers in the vineyard of the Lord, but the great nursery from which we constantly fill up the ranks in the itinerancy, and even increase the number of labourers, as the work increases. If Methodism, then, be the work of God, as it most assuredly is, he that would touch the local preachers, in order to set aside or contract their usefulness, would touch the apple of God's eye. Zech. ii. 8.

As the last chapter of this book has not so close a connexion with the other chapters, as the names of the Methodist preachers, dead and living, I shall close the third chapter with a list of them, or rather three separate lists. The first contains the names of those now employed by the conference, with the years in which they began to travel, placed against each name. The second, the names of those who have died in the work since its commencement, with the years when they set out, and when they died, on the left and right side of the names, as far as I could collect with any tolerable certainty. But in this list very probably there will be some few inaccuracies. The third list records the names of those who departed from the work, or settled as local preachers, and as such have been, at different periods expelled or discontinued.

A

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ALPHABETICALLY ARRANGED,

OF

ITINERANT PREACHERS,

NOW IN CONNEXION OF THE LATE

REV. J. WESLEY, DECEASED.

A

1765 ASHMAN, William
1766 Asbury, Francis
1775 Allum, Duncan Mac
1781 Atmore, Charles
1782 Armstrong, Gustavus
1783 Armstrong, Joseph
1787 Armstrong, Francis
1789 Anderson, James
1790 Aver, William
1791 Anderson, Henry
1791 Armstrong, William
1792 Arthur, John Mac
1792 Alcorn, Samuel
1794 Alexander, James
1796 Aikenhead, John
1797 Averill, Adam
1797 Atherton, William
1801 Adam, John Mac
1802 Ashton, Thomas
1804 Andrews, Lewis
1804 Asher, John
1806 Allen, James
1808 Abbott, John
1808 Anwyl, Edward
1808 Armstrong, Joseph
1808 Ault, William
1809 Akerman, James
1809 Appleyard, John
1809 Armitage, John
1810 Agar, Joseph
1810 Allen, Richard
1810 Appleton, William

B

1760 Brown, Isaac
1768 Bardsley, Samuel
1771 Benson, Joseph
1774 Bradburn, Samuel
1774 Brettel, Jeremiah
1776 Brown, George
1776 Brown, Jonathan
1779 Booth, John
1779 Button, George
1779 Barbe, Thomas
1782 Bogie, James
1782 Botts, Samuel
1782 Bartholomew, Thomas
1782 Barber, John
1884 Brackenbury, Robert C.
1785 Byron, James M.
1785 Black, William
1786 Bramwell, William
1786 Barrett, John
1786 Beaumont, John
1790 Braithwaite, John
1790 Burgess, Joseph
1790 Brown, Thomas
1791 Bell, James
1791 Buckley, James
1792 Brignell. James
1792 Banks, Robert

1792 Bowes, Joseph
1793 Barker, Jonathan
1794 Brownel, John
1795 Blanshard, Thomas
1795 Brookhouse, Joseph
1796 Burley, James
1796 Burdsall, John
1799 Bunting, Jabez
1799 Bullpitt, William
1800 Bennett, William
1800 Bailey, Robert
1801 Beswick, William
1801 Bryan, John
1801 Bradnock, Isaac
1802 Butler, Stephen
1802 Brown, John
1803 Breedon, William
1803 Blackett, James
1803 Banks, Edward
1814 Barr, William
1804 Bumstead John
2604 Batten, William
1805 Burton, James D.
1805 Bedford, John
1805 Brown, Jonathan, jun.
1805 Burrows, Michael
1806 Bird, William
1806 Britain, Joseph
1806 Bamford, Stephen
1806 Barton, King
1807 Bumstead, James
1807 Barrett, Benjamin
1807 Brown, John, jun.
1807 Barlow, Luke
1807 Burgess, Francis
1807 Bustard, John
1808 Baker, William
1808 Bate, James
1808 Brocklehurst, William
1808 Batty, Edward
1808 Bryan, Joshua
1809 Banwell, George
1809 Bryant, John
1809 Bursey, Thomas
1809 Beale, William
1809 Blanshard, William
1809 Bromwich, Joseph
1809 Burrows, Joseph
1810 Burton, Charles

C

1764 Costerdine, Robert
1776 Coke, Thomas
1776 Creighton, James
1780 Cole, Joseph
1781 Cooker, Thomas
1782 Clarke, Adam
1783 Crosby, John
1784 Crowther, Timothy
1784 Crowther, Jonathan
1788 Cornock, William Mac
1782 Crowther, Robert
1793 Crozier, Robert
1795 Collier, Joseph
1706 Clandennin, John
1797 Collier, Francis
1797 Chittle, John
1797 Campbell, Archibald
1797 Carter, James
1798 Campbell, Daniel
1798 Clegg, John
1799 Claxton, Marshall
1801 Clayton, Isaac
1802 Cutchen, James Mac
1802 Cord, Charles Mac
1084 Chapman, Edward
1804 Crook, William
1804 Cousin, Michael
1804 Clement, Castor
1805 Carter, Hugh
1806 Copeland, William
1806 Coates, John
1807 Cheverton Henry
1807 Cusworth, Joseph
1808 Carson, Robert
1808 Calder, Frederick
1808 Cornock, Charles Mac
1808 Carlton, William
1808 Clegg, William
1898 Cloaks, John Warwick
1807 Cullen, John
1809 Cooke, Corbett
1810 Chapman, Joseph
1810 Crosscomb, William
1810 Carey, John

D

1769 Dixon, Thomas
1780 Day, Simon
1784 Donald, James Mac

1785 Dennen, John
1787 Dall, Robert
1789 Denton John
1789 Davies, Owen
1790 Dean, John
1790 Doncaster, John
1790 Dowling Blakeley
1791 Deverell, George
1792 Dermott, George
1783 Douglass, George
1794 Daniel, Mark
1794 Drake, Joseph
1796 Douglass, William
1796 Deakins, David
1799 Decry, Henry
1802 Davies, John
1802 Derry, Francis
1802 Draper, John C.
1803 Doolittle, Thomas W.
1803 Dowty, Thomas
1805 Davies, William
1806 Dixon, William
1806 Dace, John
1806 Dunbar, James
1806 Davies, John, jun.
1807 Davies, Samuel
1808 Downing, Samuel
1808 Dowell, Samuel Mac
1808 Day, Mark
1808 Davies, Thomas
1809 Dalhy, William
1808 Dixon, Myles C.
1809 Davies, William, jun.
1809 Dawes, Mark
1809 Dodd, Thomas
1810 Dawson, William
1810 Dermid, Dermid Mac
1810 Dunn, Moses

E

1762 Easton, John
1782 Edmonson, Jonathan
1786 Evans, James
1787 Entwisle, Joseph
1790 Elliott, Richard
1791 Emett, Michael
1795 Edman Thomas
1797 Edwards, Thomas
1801 Elwarn, George Mac
1803 Etchells, James
1806 Everett, James
1807 Ellis, William
1808 Edwards, Evan
1809 Erskine, George
1809 Elliott Nathaniel
1810 Evans, David

F

1785 Fish, William
1788 Furniss, John
1790 Fearnly, Thomas
1790 Ferguson, William
1795 Farror, John
1798 Finney, Robert
1798 Fowler, William
1799 Fielding, Joshua
1800 Foster, John
1802 Fairbourne, John
1802 France, William
1802 Foster, John
1804 Floyd, Aaron
1804 Fletcher, Thomas
1807 Farrar, Abraham E.
1807 Fearnside, Joshua
1808 Frank, Joseph
1810 Flint, William
1810 Finlay, William

G

1780 Gibbon, George
1784 Griffith, Walter
1785 Gaulter, John
1786 Gill, Thomas
1786 Grace, John
1787 Gates, Samuel
1789 Grant, John
1790 Gibbon, Edward
1790 Graham, Charles
1792 Gower, Richard
1793 Gloyne, Charles
1795 Greenly, Charles
1795 Gill, James
1798 Gellard, George
1798 Gee, Thomas
1799 Garrett, Philip
1799 Gilpin, William
1800 Gartrell, James
1800 Gregory, Benjamin
1802 Graham, Thomas

1803 Games, Stephen
1804 Gillgrass, William
1804 Green, Edward F.
1806 Grindred, Edmund
1806 Gill, John
1807 Garbutt, Thomas
1807 Gostick, Joseph
1808 Goodwin, Josiah
1808 Griffith, William
1808 Gilchrist, William
1809 Green, William
1809 Griffith, Joseph
1809 Griffin, John

H

1767 Harper, Joseph
1770 Horner, William
1780 Hopkins, Robert
1782 Holmes, William
1782 Holder, George
1785 Hunter, William
1786 Highfield, George
1787 Harrison, Robert
1788 Hickling, John
1788 Hamilton, William
1788 Hamilton, Andrew
1789 Hutton, Thomas
1789 Hamilton, Andrew, jr.
1790 Harrison, Thomas
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1791 Hardcastle, Philip
1792 Hardacre, Richard
1793 Hudson, John
1794 Hicks, William
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1807 Hughes, Hugh
1807 Hyde, James
1807 Harrison, John
1807 Homer, William
1807 Harper, Samuel
1808 Hope, Samuel
1808 Holroyd, James
1808 Hollingsworth, Joseph
1808 Hill, Thomas
1808 Hughes, Lot
1809 Hayman, William
1809 Hollis, Edward
1810 Harding, William
1810 Hargrave Lawrence
1810 Hewitt, Thomas
1810 Hudson, Benjamin
1810 Harman, Joshua

I

1778 Jackson, Daniel
1783 Johnson, Robert
1783 Joyce, Matthias
1788 Jenkins, William
1789 Irwin, James
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1792 Jordan, James
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1794 Isham, Thomas
1797 Jenkin, William
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1800 Jagger, Jonas
1800 Isaac, Daniel
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1802 Jones, John
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1804 Jones, Edward (2)
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1804 Johnston, George
1805 Johnson, James

1805 Jones, Edward (3)
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1806 Jones, Maurice
1806 Irvine, John C.
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1807 James, John
1807 Jamieson, Philip
1807 Jones, Robert
1808 Jones, Edward (4)
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1808 Jones, James
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1809 Jones, Robert, jun.
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1810 Jones, David, jun.

K

1782 Kerr, John
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1788 Kelk, Thomas
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1791 Kirkpatrick, Cleland
1793 Kee, James Mac
1794 Keown, James Mac
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1799 Kitchin, Joseph
1802 Kershaw, Lawrence
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1806 Knowlan, James
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1806 Kyle, Samuel
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1810 Killan, James

L

1783 Lumb, Matthew
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M

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1791 Mahy, Henry
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1807 Rowe, John
1807 Rogers, John
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1807 Radford, John
1808 Roberts, Richard
1808 Rigg, John
1808 Roadhouse, John
1808 Rawson, John
1808 Rowe, George
1808 Roberts, Jonathan
1809 Rees, Owen
1809 Rutledge, William
1810 Rose, Thomas
1810 Radcliffe, Charles
1810 Reiley, William

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1786 Sutcliffe, Joseph
1787 Stamp, John
1788 Stewart, Matthew
1788 Smith, Robert
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1790 Sykes, George
1790 Shelmerdine, William
1790 Simpson, John
1790 Smith, William
1790 Steele, Samuel
1791 Smith, George
1792 Smith, Robert
1792 Smith, James
1792 Stephens, John
1793 Scholefield, James
1793 Shaw, Edmund
1793 Seckerson, Anthony B.
1793 Stephenson, George
1794 Simmonds, Caleb
1794 Stewart, John
1795 Stanley, Thomas
1795 Sturgeon, Alexander
1796 Sedserf, John
1797 Stanley Jacob
1798 Slinger, Thomas
1799 Slack, John
1799 Stewart, James
1800 Stewart, William
1801 Sterling, James
1802 Simmons, John
1802 Strong, Robert
1803 Sykes, James
1803 Sewell, Samuel
1803 Scholefield, William
1803 Sidserf, James
1803 Slater, Barnard
1804 Sutcliffe, William
1804 Slugg, Thomas
1805 Simpson, John, jun.
1806 Sibley, Nicholas
1806 Sleep, William
1806 Smetham, Richard
1806 Squarebridge, John
1806 Skelton, Thomas
1806 Spink, James
1807 Sykes, George, jun.
1807 Simpson, Thomas
1808 Stephenson, Humphrey
1808 Saunders, Joseph
1808 Sedgwick, John
1808 Sleigh, William
1808 Smith, John, jun.
1809 Sugden, James
1809 Sugden, Samuel
1809 Storry, John
1809 Shaw, Jervis
1809 Shaw, Barnabas
1809 Stones, William

T

1761 Taylor, Thomas

1777 Taylor, Joseph
1781 Tattersall, Thomas
1786 Townsend, John
1787 Truscott, Francis
1788 Tunnicliffe, Charles
1790 Taylor, Samuel
1790 Trethewey, Thomas
1792 Trefry, Richard
1792 Tobias, Matthew
1794 Turton, William
1794 Towler, Edward
1794 Timperley, William
1794 Turner, Edward
1796 Townley, James
1795 Taylor, Andrew
1798 Tinton, Isaac
1798 Taylor, John
1801 Trampleasure, William
1801 Taft, Zach.
1802 Taft, Henry
1802 Thompson, George
1802 Thompson, Edward
1803 Tranter, William
1803 Taylor, Joseph, jun.
1804 Triffett, Anthony
1804 Toase, William
1804 Todd, William
1806 Twiddy, Thomas
1807 Towers, William
1807 Towland, John
1808 Tomlinson, Richard
1808 Toogood, William
1808 Talboys, Thomas
1808 Tuck, Henry
1809 Thomas, Thomas
1809 Thomas, Owen
1809 Thompson, Thomas
1810 Taylor, William
1810 Thomas, James
1810 Theobold, William
1810 Thompson, John

V

1775 Vasey, Thomas, sen.
1795 Vaughan, Martin
1801 Vasey, Thomas, jun.
1806 Vipond, David

W

1767 Wittam, John
1769 Wrigley, Francis
1770 Watson, James
1773 Wood, James
1979 Warrener, William
1780 West, William
1787 Woodrow, John
1787 Wood, Thomas
1788 Wilshaw, John
1789 Wood, Samuel
1791 Wilson, Stephen
1792 Ward, John
1793 West, Francis
1793 Waddy, Richard
1795 Wood, John
1796 Whiteside, Cuthbert
1796 Worrill, Zach.
1796 Williams, William
1797 Woolmer, Samuel
1797 Walmsley, John
1798 Welburn, William
1798 Wilton, Thomas
1799 Wintle, Richard
1799 Wilson, John
1799 Watson, John
1799 Wilson, John, jun.
1800 Waugh, David
1801 Ward, Valentine
1801 Wilson, Maximilian
1801 Wheeler, Robert
1802 Waller, James
1802 Warren, Samuel
1803 Woodall, William
1804 Walker, Josiah
1804 Weir, Alexander
1804 Wilson, Joseph
1804 Womersley, Joseph
1805 Williams, Jonathan
1805 Warren, Thomas
1805 Walton, John
1805 Worth, William
1805 Wright, John
1805 Wheelhouse, John
1806 Wooley, Samuel P.
1807 Williams, John, 1st.
1807 Willis, John
1807 Willoughby, George
1807 Warren, George
1807 Wiggins, John
1808 Webb, Samuel
1808 Worrell, Joseph.

1808 Wilson, George
1808 Watkin, Robert
1808 Waugh, John
1808 Waugh, Thomas.
1809 Williams, John, 2d.
1809 Williams, John, 3d,
1809 Waterhouse, John
1810 Worden, John
1810 Ward, William
1810 Ward, Samuel
1810 Williams, David
1810 Whitworth, Solomon
1810 Whitworth, James
1810 Wilson, Robert

Y

1779 Yewdall, Zach.
1793 Yates, Thomas

AN

ALPHABETICAL LIST

OF THOSE

PREACHERS

WHO HAVE DIED IN THE

CONNEXION,

AS FAR AS CAN BE WELL ASCERTAINED:

WITH THE RESPECTIVE TIMES OF THEIR ADMISSION AND DEATH.

A

1766 ALLEN, John 1810
1781 Algar, Joseph 1805
1786 Atkins, John 1805
1794 Anderson, Joseph 1803
1794 Ashall, John 1809
1797 Allum, Wm. Mac 1810
1809 Arter, Richard 1809

B

1743 Beard, Thomas 1744
1752 Brammah, William 1780
1763 Boardman, Richard 1782
1765 Burke, Richard 1778
1766 Blackwell, Richard 1767
1767 Bricoe, Thomas 1797
1771 Boon, Charles 1795

1771 Brettell, John 1796
1772 Broadbent, John 1795
1772 Burney, John Mac ——
1773 Bradford, Joseph 1808
1774 Barry, James 1783
1775 Beanland, John 1798
1776 Boothby, William 1801
1778 Blair, Andrew 1793
1783 Burbeck, Edward 1787
1784 Butterfield, Wm. 1795
1785 Bland, Charles 1804
1786 Raldwin, George 1810
1786 Baxter, John 1806
1786 Bates, Samuel 1803
1787 Burnett, John 1788
1787 Black, John 1790
1791 Bishop, Abraham 1793
1792 Balleau, Francis 1802
1800 Bocock, Joseph 1802
1800 Burkenhead, John 1803
1805 Biggins, Thomas 1810
1807 Bissex, John 1808

C

1748 Catlow, Jonathan 1763
1752 Crabb, William 1764
1741 Coates, Alexander 1765
1746 Cownley, Joseph 1792
1762 Carlill, Thomas 1802
1763 Cattermole, Tho. 1799
1764 Coates, Richard 1765
1767 Cherry, Thomas 1773
1767 Collins, William 1797
1774 Corbett, Thomas 1789
1775 Crook, John 1806
1779 Cornock, Wm Mac 1789
1780 Crickett, John 1807
1780 Cousins, Jonathan 1806
1783 Cowmeadow, John 1786
1785 Coleman, Andrew 1786
1789 Cox, William 1810
1794 Cook, John 1795

D

1743 Downes, John 1774
1742 Darney, William 1780
1764 Dempster, James 1775
1765 Dillon, John 1769
1787 Dickinson, Peard 1802
1787 Darrah, John 1807
1788 Dunn, Thomas 1802
1790 Denton, William 1795
1794 Dumpleton, Thomas 1807
1795 Dutton, John 1800
1797 Donald, Barth. Mac 1799
1801 Debell, Philip 1803
1806 Denton, James 1809

E

1762 Ellis, John 1772
1782 Empringham, R. 1792
1788 Elliott, Thomas 1795
1803 Evans, Henry 1808

F

1755 Fenwick, John 1787
1765 Furze, John 1800
1780 Foster, Henry 1787
1781 Fletcher, John 1785
1786 Frazer, Francis 1789
1791 Foster, John, sen. 1809
1792 Fenwick, William 1808
1795 Furnace, John 1801
1802 Fisher, John 1809

G

1744 Gilbert, Nicholas 1763
1746 Greenwood, Paul 1776
1763 Greenwood, Parson 1811
1768 Goodwin, John 1808
1768 Garnett, Joseph 1773
1776 Gaffney, James 1779
1785 Gamble, Robert 1791
1786 Gore, James 1790
1786 Gordon, David 1800
1788 Graham, Daniel 1794
1793 Green, Robert 1800
1801 Gamble, William 1801

H

1744 Holmes, William 1747
1747 Hopper, Christoph. 1802
1755 Hanby, Thomas 1797
1761 Hanson, Thomas 1805
1766 Harrison, Lancelot 1807
1767 Haime, John 1784
1767 Hunter, William 1798
1768 Heyward, Robert 1804
1776 Harrison, John 1777
1776 Hoskins, Thomas 1778

1780 Hodgson, Samuel 1795
1787 Hewett, Thomas 1801
1791 Hurley, John 1801
1794 Harris, Samuel 1797
1796 Haslam, Peter 1808
1798 Hawkshaw, John 1806
1799 Hallam, Joseph 1805
1800 Hearnshaw, John, 1809
1802 Harrison, William 1809
1803 Haigh, Abraham 1810

I

1747 Jane, John 1750
1752 Johnson, Thomas 1797
1754 Jaco, Peter 1781
1761 Isherwood, Thomas 1762
1761 Johnson, John 1804
1777 Jackson, Edward 1806
1783 Jerom, Joseph ——
1796 Jennings, John 1800
1797 Jeune, Francis 1800
1799 Jackson, William 1803

K

1780 Keighley, Joshua 1787
1784 Kersey, James Mac 1800
1784 Kyte, Charles 1803
1799 Keys, Thomas 1801

L

1754 Lucas, Richard 1766
1757 Lowes, Matthew 1795
1758 Lee, Thomas 1786
1763 Levick, Samuel 1771
1773 Leach, John 1810
1776 Lumley, William 1777
1778 Livermore, John 1783
1780 Longley, Thomas 1809
1789 Lomas, Robert 1810
1803 Linnell, Edward 1808

M

1748 Meggett, Samuel 1764
1761 Morgan, John 1782
1776 Mealey, John 1788
1759 Manners, John 1763
1749 Maddern, John ——
1751 Mitchell, Thomas 1785
1754 Murlin, John 1799
1757 Mather, Alexander 1800
1762 Minethorpe, Wm. 1776
1764 Mason, John 1810
1769 Mott, Thomas 1773
1774 Moon, John 1801
1774 Mill, Peter 1806
1781 Millar, John 1796
1787 Marshall, Michael 1794
1788 Mullen, James Mac 1805
1792 Martin, William 1795
1794 Montgomery, Arch. 1800
1797 Martin, Charles 1799
1797 Moses, John 1800
1800 Morrison, Joseph 1808
1804 Mill, Thomas 1806

N

1747 Nelson, John 1774
1778 Norris, John 1782
1778 Naylor, Robert 1783
1790 Newton, Booth 1811

O

1758 Oldham, John 1766
1753 Olivers, Thomas 1799
1786 Owens, Thomas 1808

P

1759 Pool, John 1801
1760 Pennington, William 1767
1762 Pawson, John 1806
1767 Peacock, John 1803
1772 Price, John ——
1772 Payne, Thomas 1783
1773 Percival, William 1803
1775 Prichard, John 1784
1776 Pescod, Joseph 1805
1781 Peacock, Christoph. 1786
1784 Pearce, Benjamin 1795
1787 Pugh, Hugh 1788
1794 Parsons, Thomas 1807
1807 Parkinson, James 1810

R

1757 Rodd, William 1760
1749 Rowell, Jacob 1784
1759 Roberts, Robert 1800
1762 Richardson, John 1792
1765 Robertshaw, Jer. 1788
1772 Rutherford, Tho. 1806
1774 Rogers, James 1807

1776	Robinson, Jasper	1798
1787	Roberts, John	1788
1791	Robinson, Thomas	1793
1798	Richardson, James	1799
1799	Richard, William A	1801
1800	Robertson, Wm.	1807
1802	Richardson, Tho.	1804
1802	Robinson, John	1805

S

1747	Secombe, Thomas	1758
1744	Slocombe, John	1777
1742	Swindells, Robert	1783
1763	Shaw, John	1793
1766	Standering, John	1771
1767	Smith, John	1773
1768	Seed, Richard	1805
1770	Swan, Robert	1811
1773	Shorter, George	1779
1799	Simpson, William	1804
1785	Seward, Thomas	1787
1787	Sanderson, William	1810
1787	Sandoe, John	1810
1788	Stephens, John	1789
1788	Smith, Robert	1801
1789	Sanderson, John	1803
1794	Stanton, Thomas	1808
1796	Sturgeon, William	1807
1797	Shaw, Thomas	1801
1799	Shakespeare, Joseph	1809

T

1759	Thompson, William	1799
1760	Tobias, Thomas	1767
1763	Thomson, Joseph	1809
1770	Tennant, Thomas	1793
1786	Thoresby, William	1807
1785	Thoresby, Richard	1786
1789	Thompson, Jonath.	1789

V

1775	Valton, John	1794
1797	Vipond, John	1789
1797	Vipond, William	1809

W

1750	Walsh. Thomas	1758
1756	Westell, Thomas	1794
1764	Wright, Duncan	1791
1765	Walsh, Richard	——
1768	Watkins, Christop.	1802
1769	Whatcoat, Richard	1807
1769	Wilkinson, Robert	1781
1769	Wells, Samuel	1780
1769	Whitaker, William	1794
1770	Winby, William	1772
1776	Watkinson, Rich.	1793
1778	Warwick, Thomas	1810
1779	Wawne, George	1781
1779	Wadsworth, Geo.	1797
1781	Wray. James	1793
1782	Wride, Thomas	1807
1783	Wilson, William	1808
1786	Williams, James	——
1788	Willis, Mark	1795
1789	Werril, Thomas	1792
1797	White, George	1800

A LIST

OF THOSE

PREACHERS

WHO

DEPARTED FROM THE WORK, OR WERE EXPELLED;

WITH THE RESPECTIVE TIMES, AS FAR AS CAN BE ASCERTAINED, OF THEIR ADMISSION AND DEPARTURE.

N. B. As the Conference, in many cases, has omitted to distinguish between those who departed of their own accord, and some few who were at different times expelled, and also in some cases to mention at all those who retired, this List contains promiscuously both descriptions.

	A	
1762	ATLAY, John	1788
1770	Avoy, John Mac	——
1776	Armstrong, Robert	1788
1778	Accutt, John	1785
1783	Adamson William	1786
	B	
1747	Bennett, John	1752
1762	Bumstead, Daniel	1775
1765	Brownfield, James	1770
1766	Barker, William	1780
1767	Buckingham, Wm.	1770
1768	Bell, Robert	1769
1769	Barnes, Thomas	1770
1771	Bristol, John	1777
1778	Bent, James	——
1778	Blake, Robert	1784
1770	Bridge, Robert	1790
1783	Bond, Charles	1793
1785	Blagborne, Wm.	1809
1786	Broadbent, Thomas	1799
1787	Barrowclough, Dav.	1806
1789	Brandon, William	1791
1790	Boyle, John	1802
1792	Brown, William	1795
1792	Brice, John	1800
1800	Bagnall, John	1803
1804	Brownless, John	1806
1804	Brocklehurst, Tho.	1807
1809	Broadbelt, Joseph	1810
	C	
1760	Clough, James	1774
1764	Cheek, Moseley	1769
1767	Cotty, James	1780
1767	Colley, Benjamin	——
1768	Crowle, Jonathon	1776
1772	Christian, John	1777
1777	Church, William	1790
1779	Christie, James	1799
1787	Collins, Wm. jun.	——
1789	Cross, Joseph	1800
1791	Cummins, Alex.	1798
1793	Clarke, John	1796
1795	Cooke, Joseph	1806
1806	Constable, William	1810
	D	
——	Davis, John	1768
1753	Davis, Mark	1769
1766	Dancer, Thomas	1767
1766	Deaves, James	1768
1768	Duncan, John	1772
1772	Davis, Robert	1783
1773	Dufton, William	1792

1774 Delap, Andrew 1779
1775 Dean Peter 1778
1776 Davis, Robert ——
1780 Dice, George 1786
1788 Drew, Richard 1792
1788 Dobson, Thomas ——
1789 Dieuade, William 1797
1798 Davis, Thomas 1808

E

1747 Edwards, John 1753
1771 Eden, Thomas 1772
1772 Eels, William 1788
1781 Ellis, Thomas 1787
1783 Edwards, Samuel 1788
1792 Eversfield, Stephen 1797

F

1765 Fugill, William 1768
1770 Floyd, John 1782
1771 Fenwick, Michael 1784
1775 Ferguson, Peter 1776
1770 Fothergill, Joseph 1776
1790 Franklin, William 1797
1806 Fussell, James 1809

G

1768 Garnett, Joseph ——
1757 Glazebrook, James 1774
1760 Gibbs, John 1774
1774 Guthrie, George 1778
1780 Green, William 1796
1782 Glascock, John 1788
1786 Gills, John 1798
1786 Geary, John Mac 1793
1790 Greaves, Thomas 1792
1790 Graham, John 1798
1798 Gesburn, John 1803
1798 Gilead, John 1806
1803 Gunn, Robert 1808

H

1738 Humphreys, Joseph 1740
1741 Haughton, John 1760
1742 Hardwick, Thomas 1749
1761 Heslop, John 1768
1764 Helton, John 1777
1758 Hosmer, John 1770
1764 Henderson, Rich. 1771
1766 Halliday, Thomas 1786
1767 Harry, William 1770
1768 Howard, Robert 1770
1769 Hudson, James 1777
1761 Hudson, George 1780
1769 Hern, Jonathan 1791
1771 Hindmarsh, Jas. 1783
1773 Hunt, Richard 1774
1776 Hall, James 1798
1776 Hamson, John, sen. 1785
1777 Hamson, John, jun. 1785
1777 Howe, John 1789
1782 Hoskins, William 1789
1783 Hetherington, Wm. 1791
1784 Hindmarsh, Wm. ——
1786 Harper, John 1799
1786 Heath, William 1808
1787 Holmes, John 1789
1795 Hill, Josiah 1803
1799 Heywood, John 1803
1804 Hurd, Thomas 1806
1807 Hodgson, Charles 1810
1807 Hewgill, Joseph 1810
1809 Harwood, John 1810

I

1746 Jones, John 1767
1744 Jones, Joseph 1760
1743 Jones, James 1749
1767 James, Thomas 1770
1780 Inglis, Andrew 1793
1781 Ingham, John 1786
1781 Jordan, James 1788
1794 Jones, John 1799
1798 Joll, Diggory 1801

K

1752 Kershaw, James 1757
1774 Kershaw, Arthur 1775
1786 Kelshall Stephen 1787
1785 Kilham, Alexander 1796
1792 Kyte, Joseph 1796

L

1743 Larwood, Samuel 1753
1772 Linnell, William 1773
1765 Longbottom, James ——
1779 Lindsay, Robert 1788
1788 Lyons, James 1796
1788 Lee, Nebuchadnez. 1791
1790 Lawton, James 1797
1800 Lockwood, William 1803

M

1740 Maxfield, Thomas 1762
1742 Meyrick, Thomas 1750
1750 Morgan, James ——
1746 Moss, Richard 1752
1753 Murray, John 1774
1759 Manners, Nicholas 1775
1767 Magor, John 1770
1771 Moulson, John ——
1773 Moore, Joseph 1779
1773 Mather, Ralph ——
1773 Moorhouse, Mich. 1786
1774 Moore, William 1785
1767 Morley, John 1776
1777 Moore, Hugh 1790
1779 Mitchell, Samuel 1799
1786 Mosely, Abraham 1805
1786 Moorhead, Samuel ——
1787 Melcombson, John ——
1798 Moore, John 1801
1800 Mitchell, Page 1803

N

1766 Nabb, Alex. Mac 1780
1761 Newall, Thomas 1780

O

1746 Oddie, James 1771
1765 Orpe, William 1768
1760 Oliver, John 1784

P

1767 Peacock, John 1769
1764 Price, Peter 1768
1765 Pilmoor, Joseph 1774
1768 Proctor, Stephen 1782
1769 Pitt, William 1772
1770 Perfect, James 1785
1771 Price, Nehemiah 1790
1787 Philips, George 1789
1802 Poulter, Thomas 1804

Q

1789 Quigg, James Mac 1806

R

1760 Roe, George 1766
1742 Reeves, Jonathan 1760
1750 Roberts, William 1760
1740 Richards, Thomas 1759
1765 Rourke, Thomas 1770
1780 Readshaw, Thomas 1783
1762 Rankin, Thomas 1787
1765 Rea, James 1770
1767 Ryan, Thomas 1791
1768 Rodda, Martin 1781
1776 Robbins, Henry 1784
1783 Renwick, James ——
1785 Ramshaw, John 1795
1785 Robotham, John ——
1799 Radcliffe, James 1804
—— Roberts, Tho. jun. 1804

S

1749 Skilton, Charles 1753
1764 Stephens, James 1787
1767 Smith, Samuel 1779
1768 Sanderson, Hugh 1777
1772 Severn, William 1778
1774 Smith, Francis 1775
1775 Saunderson, Joseph 1784
1776 Skinner, James 1782
1780 Shaw, Thomas ——
1786 Smith, Thomas 1788
1770 Slater, Edward 1776
1782 Scott, Robert 1790
1802 Story, John 1804
1796 Shrowder, Hans 1802

T

1764 Thomas, Barnabas 1772
1743 Trembath, John 1760
1771 Tatton, Thomas 1778
1774 Tunney, William 1781
1774 Thom, William 1797
—— Thoresby, Francis 1795
1786 Tregortha, John ——
1788 Taylor, Henry 1797
1794 Thomson, Rich. 1802

U

1785 Vernor, Thomas 1791
1770 Undrell, John 1778

W

1744 Walker, Francis 1753
1747 Williams, Thomas ——
1742 Wheatly, James 1754
1745 Webster, Eleazer 1751
1745 Williamson, Rich. 1791

1764	Whitehead, John	1769	1778	Ward, Nathaniel	1785
1765	Woodcock, Samuel	1776	1779	Walker, John	1782
1763	Whitwell, William	1769	1785	Walker, Peter	1788
1768	Wolfe, Francis	1782	1787	West, John	1790
——	Watson, John, sen.	1773	1788	Winscombe, Jasper	1792
1770	Wright, Richard	1777	1788	Wyment, Thomas	1891
1770	Williams, Robert	——	——	Watson, Richard	1791
1774	Whitely, John	1779	1797	White, John	1801

CHAPTER IV.

METHODISM DEFENDED.

Being an Answer to some Objections to the Methodists; and containing Remarks on TOLERATION, *and a vindication of the Principle of universal and equal Liberty in Matters of Religion.*

AND now, reader, after perusing this account of the history, the doctrines, and discipline of the Methodists, what do you think; what is there to excite disgust, or blame? "Well," you will say, "at any rate, many people say a great deal against them." And was there ever a pious people upon earth, of whom the world did not say a great deal of evil? It is one awful proof, as well as fruit, of the fall and depravity of human nature. "The carnal mind is enmity against God," and therefore against the things and the people of God.—Men would be shocked at the sight of themselves, and one another, were they to avow themselves the enemies of God. It would be rather too gross, for men to declare their hatred of that holiness, which is according to the image and commands of God. And it is but here and there, that we can meet with a person who has impious courage enough to enter his protest against the word of God. The whole strength, therefore, of this malignity of heart, is reserved for the *people* of God.

Against them, the carnal mind displays itself in reviling, evil-speaking, and persecuting. But it ought to be observed, that the ungodly part of mankind, never reproach and persecute the children of God *as such;* they do it under some other pretence. They charge them with crimes, follies, and absurdities, which they are not guilty of, and then clamour against them as evil-doers. If they did this in the green tree, surely they will do it much more in the dry.

The enemies of Jesus Christ laid to his charge things that he knew not; then seized him as an enemy to God and man, and under this pretence, condemned him to die, hastened him to Calvary, and crucified him there. One party cried out, "He is an enemy to Moses," in other words, to their established church, of which Moses was the founder. Another party exclaimed, "He is an enemy to Cæsar," that is, the government, of which Cæsar, or the Roman emperor, was the head, as Canaan was then reduced to a Roman province.

And in reading the Acts of the Apostles, we may constantly observe, that the bitter persecutions raised against the first Christians, and the first Christian preachers especially, were uniformly under false accusations. They were charged with being enemies to the established religion, both in Judea, at Ephesus, and various other places, where they preached the gospel.—These messengers of the true and living God, were termed, "pestilent fellows, sowers of sedition," disturbers of the public tranquility, and disseminating new and dangerous doctrines.

Some of the calumniators of the Methodists, I do not doubt, do it ignorantly, like Saul of Tarsus, and probably like him, think they are doing God service. For the sake of these, as well as many others, I shall proceed to answer a few objections which have been made to this denomination of Christians.

In the former periods of Methodism, the outcry was, that so much praying, hearing of sermons, &c. promoted idleness; and this, together with what they contributed in support of religion, would ruin those who followed this way. But matter of fact has so constantly proved this charge to be a false one, that little is said up-

on this head at present; though it is still repeated in some places where Methodism is but little known.

1. Some object to Methodism, that "it is unnecessary, seeing we have a very good Protestant church, in which is sound doctrine, as the articles, homilies, and liturgy, testify; and also, that in this church, there is a large body of clergy, 18,000 or more, who are very learned men, and were regularly appointed to the office."

To this I answer, we *have* a church, and for a *national* one, I believe it to be the very best church in the world. And I believe the doctrines contained in the articles, homilies, and liturgy, as firmly as any churchman whatsoever; much more firmly than many of the clergy do. In my younger days, for many years, I attended the service of the church as constantly as any person in England. And to this day, when I have opportunity, it gives me pleasure to attend the service of the church. And that pleasure is much heightened, when I find the pulpit and the reading-desk harmonize in doctrine. But alas! I have too frequently found, that while the reading-desk still "held fast the form of sound words." the pulpit had "erred and strayed like a lost sheep." Had it not been for this apostacy of the pulpit. it is probable Methodism had never had an existence in its present form. For what was its origin? Why, a few young men, educated for the ministry in the church of England, became truly pious, and very zealous. They proclaimed aloud the almost forgotten doctrines of the Church of England. But these doctrines were not only out of fashion, but were greatly offensive to the main body of the clergy. They shut the doors of the churches against these pious, zealous, and orthodox clergymen. The consequence was, they must either retreat to other places of worship, preach in the open air, or give up preaching altogether. But, believing that a dispensation of the gospel was committed to them, and that woeful consequences would follow their departure from their heavenly calling, they preached where Providence opened the way for them.

But, what could occasion in the church of England, this departure from her original doctrines, and this aversion to their being preached? Every effect has a cause.

What are the *chief causes* of this? I believe the *first cause* to be, a most capital error in the appointments to the ministerial office. It seems to have been forgotten, that no man can be a proper *Christian minister*, without first becoming a *Christian*. Learning, and other qualifications may be good in their place, but nothing can supply the want of piety. It is true, the clergy are *all* Christians in name: I hope *many* of them are not only *almost*, but *altogether* Christians. But is this *universally*, or even *generally* the case? There are many, whose morals may be very decent, but who yet seem to have no sense of religion upon their minds. They carry about them no savour of piety; and are no way fitted to watch over souls as they who must give an account. If they *do duty*, as it is called, it is as much as can be looked for.

Secondly the way by which clergymen very frequently become possessed of benefices, or livings, operates strongly to the injury of the church. They are neither chosen by the people, to whom they minister in holy things, nor by their ministerial brethren. But rather, they are presented to the living, either by a *single* clergyman, (the bishop) or a *single* layman, (the patron) the Lord Chancellor, or the Prime Minister of State.—If some of the livings are bestowed by the Universities, still it is in such a way as does not materially mend the matter.

In presenting a clergyman to a benefice, sometimes, no doubt, it is done as it ought to be, on account of his piety, talents, and suitableness for the situation. But, will any person, who is sufficiently acquainted with these things, say that this is *generally* the case?

Thirdly, the discipline of the Church is so notoriously and deplorably defective, as to countenance, or connive at evils innumerable. Many are the instances of immorality, and neglect of duty among the clergy; and yet, how seldom are any of them brought to any serious account for their conduct? What a rare thing for any of these to get a serious reproof from their superiors, and still more rare for one of them to be deposed from his office!

What I mean to say is, that *these* are, in my judg-

ment, the principal causes of the Church being in its present state; and it was the existence of these evils which rendered Methodism necessary.

2. Some object to Methodism, "That the preachers are not regularly *appointed* to the work of the ministry; nor yet possess sufficient *qualifications* for the work." I answer, (1.) With regard to their *appointment* to the work, it is, I think, more *scriptural* than that of the established clergy. Read the statement I have given, in the chapter on discipline, of the appointment of local and travelling preachers. Of one thing we may be absolutely certain, and that is, that God never called a wicked man to the work of the ministry. "To the wicked, saith God, what hast thou to do to take my law into thy mouth; whereas thou hatest to be reformed, and hast cast my words behind thee?" The ministers of Christ are termed ambassadors, 2 Cor. v. 20. But did ever any sovereign in the world employ a person in an embassy whom he knew hated him, and was much more attached to the cause and interests of those to whom he was sent, than to those of his master? Whosoever has a *regular* call to the ministry, it is not a sinful or unregenerated man.

As to *ordination* itself, the Methodist preachers have at least all the *essential* parts. They undergo an examination, both as to their characters and qualifications for the ministry, far more suited to the nature of the office, than those pass through who are most loud in urging this objection. Had *they* to pass through such a process before they could obtain deacons orders, as a preacher among the Methodists do, prior to his admission on trial, some of them would never be ordained deacons. And had they after that, to wait four years before they could obtain priests orders, and then go through such an examination as our preachers do before they are admitted into full connexion, many a deacon would never be made a priest. Our ordination, (as the admissions above-mentioned may be very properly termed,) is not deficient in any point, except in the point of laying on of hands. And though this was practised by the apostles, yet it is not declared to be necessary, nor is it enjoined for general observance. Nay, it

will admit of a dispute, whether the ceremony of laying on of hands was any way particularly connected with ordination to the ministry. It was used upon such occasions by the apostles, at least sometimes. But it is not *certain* it was *always* used when men were set apart for that sacred office; while it is very certain they laid hands upon other persons without any such appointment. This was done when the seven were appointed "to serve tables," and to look after the "widows" and other needy persons "in the daily ministrations," Acts vi. 1—6. Peter and John laid their hands on those people of Samaria, whom they baptized, after they "had received the word of God," Acts viii. 7. Ananias "put his hands upon Saul," but it is expressly said that he did this that he might receive his sight, Acts ix. 12, 17. Hands were laid upon Saul and Barnabas, at Antioch; but this was not so much an appointment to the ministry, as a *setting apart* for a particular mission. They had been preachers a good while, and had taught much people," for "a whole year" at Antioch, Acts xi. 26.—xii. 1—4. Paul laid his hands upon certain disciples at Ephesus, whom he baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus," and who had before been baptized "into John's baptism," Acts xix. 1—7. Paul "laid his hands on" Publius, the chief man of the island of Melita, or Malta. and "prayed with him," and "healed him." These instances suffice to show what is meant by "the doctrine of laying on of hands," Heb. vi. 2. But whatever may be said about the *absolute necessity* of the laying on of hands, at appointments to the gospel ministry, I feel no inclination to dispute the *propriety* of it. A number of us have received this from men whom *we* think as much authorized to confer ordination as any bishop in Christendom. And should the conference so determine, it may easily be imparted to all the preachers now in our connexion, and all succeeding ones upon their being *received into full connexion.* It will be found a much easier task to put hands *upon* a man's head, than to put mental qualifications *into* it.—And it is to be feared that "mitred heads" sometimes lay "hands on sculls that cannot teach, and will not learn." Nor is this defect confined to Episcopalians, as

the following anecdote seems to intimate. At a certain ordination in Scotland, when the time came for putting hands upon the candidates head, one minister was observed to keep his distance, and stretching out his hand, laid the end of his stick upon the young minister's head. Being afterwards spoken to upon this strange act, he pleasantly observed, "He thought timber to timber formed a very proper union."

I shall only add, that I am satisfied, there are many clergymen belonging to the Church, of good natural parts, of useful, as well as ornamental learning, and a goodly and increasing number, who have both the form and the power of godliness. And exceeding glad should I be, were I able to say this, touching the whole of them.

As to *qualifications*, (2.) The Methodists require, that a man should be able to pray and preach, and that without a book. Whereas, had they had nothing to do but to pray by a form, which was made long before they were born, and to read sermons, made perhaps by others, no qualification would have been necessary, but the bare ability to read. While these gentry are talking about "*unqualified* and *insufficient* teachers," survey the comparative difference between the man thus slandered, and vast numbers of their own order. Take both of them to a pulpit. These "unqualified and insufficient teachers," can pray and preach, and that in a way which reaches both to the understandings and affections of the congregation. Meantime, this gentleman, who talks about his being regularly bred to the ministry, and who thinks himself duly *qualified*, and amply *sufficient* for the work, how does he acquit himself? Why he convinces us that he has learned to read, and this is all we can fairly gather from his performance. But take his crutches from him, and let him pray and preach without a book. We will not require him to do this in his boasted Latin and Greek; these, he may say, and perhaps very truly, that he has in a great measure forgotten. But let him speak in good sterling English for an hour, in such a way as to give satisfaction to the major part of a common congregation. But alas! he is utterly at a loss! He *does* nothing, and *can* do nothing; he puts us

in mind of Isa. lvi. 10. "They are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark."

Again, a sick man wants some person to pray with him. The clergyman is sent for. After a little conversation, perhaps not much calculated to edify, he pulls out a book, and reads a short prayer by the bedside of the dying person. This being finished, he perhaps tells the afflicted person he hopes he will soon be better, and bids him farewell. And in this manner does he give his parishioners "*ghostly counsel*," and assist and comfort them when they lie on the bed of affliction. In such cases, it frequently happens, that a Methodist preacher is afterwards sent for, and his labours are found to be of a more suitable and profitable sort. But the objector urges.

(3.) That "these preachers have not had a regular classical education." I answer, *education* is a very good thing, and a *classical* education is not held in contempt by the Methodists. But it is not a thing indispensably necessary to a proper and useful discharge of the work of the ministry. Such an education may be convenient and useful, and at any rate, ornamental.—But, a man of only a common education, may learn and teach all that is necessary to salvation; the knowledge of every essential doctrine of the gospel, and every branch of religion, whether speculative, experimental, or practical. What knowledge is necessary on the subject of religion, which cannot be found in English authors? Nay, what knowledge have nineteen out of twenty, yea, ninety-nine out of a hundred, of these very clergymen, in matters of religion, but what might have been obtained, and even in greater perfection, from authors whose works are published in the English language? is *shadow* to supersede, and triumph over *substance*? Besides, there are some Methodist preachers who would sustain no injury to their reputation, by a comparison with many clergymen in point of learning.

Did the preaching of the gospel, consist chiefly of learned criticisms, the advantage of a classical education would be greater than it is: more especially, if the whole, or a considerable part of the people were classical scholars also. And except this be the case, how

preposterous is it, to hear a preacher quoting scraps of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, in his sermons, which, perhaps, not two persons in the congregation understand? And should he not understand some of these scraps himself, it will not make the least difference in such cases. The edification of the people will be just the same, and his fame, as a linguist will not be at all tarnished, at least, when not a single linguist is present. All therefore, who are ambitious of this tinsel, must garnish their discourses with scraps of the learned languages, particularly among country farmers, mechanics, and village peasants.

Waving the *languages* in which the classics were written, what remarkable advantages may be obtained from the *matter* contained in them? Is that such as is particularly calculated to promote a spirit of Christian piety? Has it some very powerful tendency to stimulate to an imitation of Jesus Christ, in temper and conduct? Does it specially instruct a man how to instruct others in genuine godliness and true Christianity?—Would not the classical authors, most proper to be put in the hands of men about to become members of Jesus Christ, be the Bible, the Epistles of the Apostolic Fathers, a well written history of the Church of Christ, since the death of the twelve apostles, especially a history of the Waldenses, and Albigenses; Fox's Book of Martyrs: the History of the Popes, and the Papacy; Burnet's History of the Reformation; the Sufferings of the Protestants in France, especially in the reign of Lewis the 14th; Neal's History of the Puritans; and the Histories of the Church of Scotland, in the reigns of Charles the 2nd, and James 2nd. To these I would add, as Christian classics, the works of Archbishops Leighton, Tillotson, and Secker; bishops Newton, Horne, and Porteus; of Mr. Baxter, and various others of the puritanical and nonconformist writers, especially those of Dr. Watts and Dr. Doddridge, as well as the writings of Mr. Whitefield, Mr. Wesley, and Mr. Fletcher.—Many others might be mentioned, especially Shuckford's and Prideaux's Connexions. A few good Commentaries on the Old and New-Testaments should be a distinguished part of the ministerial classics, as well as a History, a Dictionary, and a Geography of the Bible.

And also the Lives of Eminent Christians, more particularly the Lives of Eminent Ministers of Christ.

A diligent perusal of these books, would be much more likely to prepare a man for the Christian ministry, than reading what are commonly termed *the Classics.*— A surprising circumstance, indeed, that a man should be thought not sufficiently instructed to preach the glorious gospel of peace, without being sent to the polluted heathenish schools of Greece and Rome, and by some of these classical authors, to have his judgment perverted, and the bias of his soul directed to, and inflamed with a thirst after the desire of the eye, the desire of the flesh, and the pride of life: to be brought to admire, and almost adore, what is earthly, sensual and devilish; to have his imagination fired, almost beyond all bounds, with ideas of lust and debauchery, war and slaughter, robbery and devastation! Would it not have been a much better preparation for declaring the truth as it is in Jesus, and the whole counsel of God, to have been able to say, he had diligently studied the whole Bible, and especially the New-Testament, and that both for his own direction and to qualify him to instruct others, and that he had accompanied this reading with much prayer; that he had read, and deeply studied the books mentioned above, with many more of a similar description: above all, that he truly feared and loved God, saw and felt the value of immortal souls, the evil of sin, the necessity of holiness, the fallen state of human nature, the plan of salvation by Jesus Christ, and the solemn and infinite importance of eternal things?

But it is objected, "Many of these preachers are mechanics, and were brought up to occupations of the more laborious and less respectable classes." And is there any thing criminal or degrading in this? Elisha followed the *laborious* employment of plowing, until the very hour he was called to the prophetic office. The apostle Paul was brought up to the trade of tent-making, and wrought at it after he was employed in preaching the gospel. And it is highly probable, that Jesus Christ wrought with his reputed father, Joseph, at the business of a carpenter, till the commencement of his public min ministry. See Matt. xiii. 55, and Mark vi. 3. Let

reason and common sense decide whether being employed in an honest and useful mechanical calling, can unfit a man for becoming a preacher of the gospel, more than idleness, shooting and hunting, card-playing and dancing. The argument is much on the side of the mechanic. And it is worthy of observation, that among all those whom our Saviour called to the apostolic office, there was not one genteel sluggard; not one light, airy, polite, and fashionable buck or beau. But they were all men who had *borne the yoke in their youth.* It would have been well, if many of the clergy had been brought up to some trade. They might have exercised themselves occasionally, had it been only for amusement, and they would have found it better for their health and reputation, than riding after dogs, hares, and foxes, or attending the races, &c. They might have known the better how to find fault with such mechanics as they have occasion to employ; and if any of them should be silenced for misconduct, they might have earned a little honest bread, instead of enlisting for soldiers, or becoming a burden to their friends.

Many persons have started at the bare idea of a man attempting to preach who had not been *regularly educated* for the purpose. But does the New-Testament, or any part of the Bible, lay any stress upon such education, or even so much as mention it? There is nothing in the *word* of God, or in the *actions* of God, that sanctions this notion. None of the apostles chosen by our Lord, when upon earth, were classical scholars. And though Paul was afterwards made an apostle, it does not appear to have been *because* he was a man of academical learning, but a sincere and zealous Christian. And hence, he held his classical learning, comparatively, in contempt. Alluding to this, he says, he became a fool for Christs sake, counted it but dung and dross, when contrasted with the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and resolved henceforth, to know nothing but Christ Jesus, and him crucified.

As to the prophets, which of them were men of literature, according to the sense commonly affixed to the term? Perhaps not one of them. I apprehend, had they been such, it would not have *prevented* their ap-

pointment to the office: but their being called to the office *without* this qualification, proves that it was not absolutely *necessary*, and also, how little value God attaches to it. But perhaps it will be said, that we read of "The sons of the prophets," who are supposed to have been students in divinity. 2 Kings, chap. ii. and chap. v. But what they really were, is very uncertain. One thing is certain, that an establishment of any seminary, called "*The School of the Prophets*," or any thing of the kind, did not form any branch of the institutions of Moses. And it is equally certain, that Jesus Christ neither established, nor ever mentioned any thing bearing a resemblance to any such establishment.

What do we read of these "sons of the prophets," who came forth to meet Elisha, that is interesting? What they said to him was so useless, that he would not listen to them, but said, "*Hold ye your peace.*"—And as he would not let them *speak*, so neither would he let them *act*. They foolishly proposed to send fifty men to search for Elijah, (who was gone to heaven,) on the tops of mountains, and in vallies, but he rebuked their folly. If these "sons of the prophets," had been of any great value, and had possessed special qualifications for the prophetic office, one might have supposed one of them would have been chosen to succeed Elijah, instead of such a blow being given to academical pride, by the calling of the new prophet from the plough tail, while these youths were deemed so "unqualified and insufficient," that they were not allowed either to speak or act.

We have no account, that the priests under the law, had any thing that could be called a classical education. We have no information that David had ever undergone such a literary drilling at any college; nor yet Solomon, the wisest of men. Yet which of our collegians can write so as to bear comparison with them? And there is neither proof nor probability that any of the prophets, or David or Solomon, were linguists. And if it be said our Saviour made his apostles linguists, I answer, the reason is plain, they were to go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, in all nations. And many different languages

were spoken in the different countries, and the people of each region understood only their own language, it was absolutely necessary, that they who were to preach to *every* creature in *all* the different nations, should be able to speak in the language of each. And if those clergymen who talk so much about languages, will stir up their zeal, and go as missionaries to the East-Indies, China, Japan, Africa, Turkey, or any part of the Continent of Europe, it is admitted it will be necessary for them to understand and speak the languages of the people they preach to. And if it be said, the knowledge of Hebrew and Greek is necessary to the right understanding of the scriptures, the languages in which the sacred volume was written; I reply, it is paying but a poor compliment to the English translators of the Bible, as well as to all our commentators and scripture critics, to suppose that a man cannot sufficiently understand the Bible, both for his own direction and the instruction of others. If all these put together are not sufficient to convey to my mind proper and sufficient ideas of the doctrines, and other matters contained in holy writ, what hope can I indulge that I shall be able, (should God spare me to the age of Methuselah, and I spent all my days in studying Greek and Hebrew) sufficiently to understand the Bible, either for the instruction of others or my own direction. Perhaps it will be deemed wandering from the point, when I say, that neither Noah, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, nor Joseph, though such very eminent men, could either write or read.—For there is neither proof nor probability, that letters were in use till the time of Moses. Could Joseph have written, we may rest assured, he would have sent a letter, by the hands of his brethren, to his aged and much-loved father, to have invited him to come down into Egypt. But nothing of the sort is mentioned or implied.

Am I then arguing against learning? No! I allow its proper worth; but I am arguing against what I call, the POPERY *of learning*. For learning, or a pretence to learning, or a little of both, is now to answer the ends, which the supremacy and infallibility of the pope, sham miracles, &c. were made to answer in former days. It

is mere dust thrown in the eyes of the people. Learning, in itself, is not an evil. But when under pretence of it, a sort of literary popery is attempted to be established, and men in square caps and other antiquated habiliments, would seize the imaginary keys of the pretended successor of St. Peter, common sense, and indignation against opposition, in whatever shape it may come, impel me to enter my protest.

Whatever may be wanting in our literary endowments, is amply compensated for in *laboriousness* and *usefulness*. In these at least, the Methodist preachers are not a whit behind the very chief of our modern apostles. Every Methodist preacher, upon an average, goes through nearly three times as much *labour* as the *generality* of other ministers, whether of the establishment, or among the different denominations of dissenters.—There are a few exceptions, but not many. Some of the clergy are not only pious and exemplary in their moral conduct, but also patterns of diligence, and laborious zeal, which their brethren would do well to imitate. And as to *usefulness*, how many of our *regular* and *learned* gentlemen, will stand the comparison? I would ask, whether more careless sinners have not been reformed, during the last seventy years, by the labours of Methodist preachers, who in a *national* point of view, have cost nothing, than by all the labours of more than *eighteen thousand* clergymen, who have cost the nation so many millions of money? This was the opinion of the celebrated Dr. Priestly, who was far from being a Methodist, though a minute observer of *moral* as well as *natural* causes and effects. It is allowed, that extensive good has been done, but this would have given them greater satisfaction had it been done in the Church. I can only say, if God had wrought *in* and *by* the Church, the Methodists would have been no hinderance, but would have rejoiced, and assisted with all their might. Whenever any clergyman has shown a disposition to do good, in his day, the Methodists have been the first to rejoice at the sight, and to give him every encouragement and assistance in their power. And in this they have often overlooked difference of opinion, and even sometimes an unfriendly disposition on the

part of such clergymen. It may be asked with surprize, what causes this antipathy to the Methodists, which we so frequently witness in clergymen, and even in some, who, on account of their piety and zeal, and their preaching agreeably to the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy, are themselves called Methodists? This question deserves a serious answer. The fact is notorious: but what can be the cause? The Methodist preachers do not get any share of the church-livings, nor cause any deduction from the salaries of the clergy; nor have they any intention, desire, or expectation of ever obtaining any part of these emoluments.

It has never been an object of Methodism to oppose the clergy of the established church. The Methodist preachers inculcate the doctrines of the Church, and frequently use the liturgy in their own chapels. And it would please them much to see the church in prosperity. For this they have long hoped and prayed.—But the conduct of the clergy, makes them almost despair of ever seeing this desire of their hearts accomplished. Nothing sinks their hopes, and excites their fears, like the following lamentable and undeniable circumstance. Many of the clergy are far more zealous against Methodism than they are against sin. A man may live in rioting and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, or other heinous sins, and perhaps neither in private nor in public does his parson say any thing to warn him of his danger, or to turn him from the evil of his ways. Here would be a fair occasion, not only to press home the grand concerns of the soul and eternity, but to represent to the sinner, *The danger of the Church*, when its members act so contrary to the gospel of Christ. In some remarkable cases, a few neighbouring clergymen might go in a body to a notorious sinner, to admonish, instruct, and pray with him. But, how seldom is this done? At the same time, if a man becomes thoughtful, reads pious books, frequents the Methodist chapel, and begins to pray, there is a great display of zeal to turn him from this new path.*

* The Vicar of P—— taking a walk on Sunday evening, not far from the Methodist chapel, perceived Mr —— at a distance, and suspected he had been there. He accosted him with some

Of all the adults in England, how few go to any place of worship? Suppose one in three attend public worship, two-thirds spend the sabbath in idleness, visiting, working, in journeys of pleasure, and some in committing more sin on that day, than on all the other days of the week. Now, here is a noble field for the exertion of clerical zeal and talents? Let them "return from following their brethren," 2 Sam. ii. 26, who are gone to the Methodist and Dissenters, and let them go after those who remain in ignorance, carelessness, and sin, bring them to their churches, and warn them, teach them, and lead them to Christ, to holiness, and heaven. The Methodists will not oppose them, but greatly rejoice to see so much good done, whatever may have been the first stimulus to such laudable and useful labour. By such conduct as this they may keep a large majority of the people in their interest. And believe me, there is work enough for all the clergy, the dissenting ministers, and all the Methodist preachers in England.

Should the objector say, "Every departure from the church, will increase a party, which either is, or may be disaffected to the state," I answer, the Methodists have proved themselves as good and loyal subjects as any in the king's dominions. There has never been one person, belonging to the Wesleyan Methodists, executed for hign treason, transported, or otherwise punished for sedition; or tried, or imprisoned, under any such charge. And whenever there has been a fair occasion for displaying it, their attachment to the government has been conspicuous. This was the case in Ireland, during the late rebellion; in the West India islands, when threatened by the French, some few years ago: to which I may add, the untarnished and distin-

warmth, "What. Mr. —— have you been to encourage these vagabond preachers? I thought a man of your understanding had known better; I am surprised at you." Mr. —— endeavouring to steady himself, for he was drunk, replied, "I have only been drinking a quart or two of ale at the Bunch of Grapes, with neighbour D. Sir" "O, I beg your pardon, I thought you had been at the Methodist chapel, good night, good night."

guished reputation those Methodists have maintained, who have been in the army and the navy.

At the battle of Fontenoy, John Haime, and a few other Methodists, greatly distinguished themselves by their courage and conduct. John Haime, after his discharge from the army, became a travelling preacher, and died the death of the righteous, at Whitchurch, in Hampshire, August 18, 1784, in the 78th year of his age. In the account of his life, written by himself, he says, "On May 1, 1745, we had a full trial of our faith at Fontenoy. This day God was pleased to prove our little flock, and to show them his power. They showed such courage and boldness in the fight, as made the officers as well as soldiers amazed. When William Clements had his arm broken by a musket ball, they would have carried him out of the battle. But he said, "No: I have an arm left to hold my sword: I will not go yet.' When another shot broke his other arm, he said, 'I am as happy as I can be out of paradise.' John Evans having both his legs taken off by a cannon-ball, was laid across a cannon to die: where, as long as he could speak, he was praising God with joyful lips."

"For my own part, I stood the hottest fire of the enemy for seven hours. But I told my comrades, 'the French have no ball made that will kill me this day.' After about seven hours, a cannon-ball killed my horse under me. An officer cried out aloud, 'Haime, where is your God now?' I answered, 'Sir, he is here with me; and he will bring me out of this battle.' Presently a cannon-ball took off his head. I was exposed both to the enemy and to our own horse; but that did not discourage me at all: for I knew the God of Jacob was with me. I had a long way to go through all our horse, the balls flying on every side. The hotter the battle grew, the more strength was given me."

William Clements wrote to Mr. Wesley, saying,— "We lay on our arms all night. In the morning the cannon began at half past four o'clock; and the Lord took away all fear from me, so that I went into the field with joy. The balls flew on either hand, and men fell in abundance; but nothing touched me till about two o'clock. Then I received a ball through my left arm,

and rejoiced so much the more. Soon after I received another in my right, which obliged me to quit the field. But I scarce knew, whether I was on earth or in heaven. It was one of the sweetest days I ever enjoyed."

The grand effectual check that was given to the late dreadful rebellion in Ireland, was very much owing to Mr. Michael M'Cormick, a Methodist. He had formerly been in the army, and still possessed both the courage and skill of a good soldier.

There was a small company of Methodists on board the *Victory*, Lord Nelson's ship, at the battle of Trafalgar. An officer, who particularly watched them, declared they were the best sailors in the ship; and expressed his astonishment that not one of them was either killed or wounded.

Finally, did ever a single Methodist desert from either the army or navy? I believe not. Deserters are almost always Churchmen. And if any thing could possibly cause any deviation, or abatement, in this respect, among the Methodists, it would be oppression and persecution: it would be precisely what these *alarmists* about *the danger of the church*, are labouring to bring on. No *pious* people ever became inimical to the government under which they lived, but through cruel treatment. It has only been when *their lives have been made bitter by reason of cruel bondage*, or unmerited affliction, like Israel in Egypt, that they have ever been brought to breathe the spirit of the posterity of that people, when they said, "What portion have we in David? Neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David," 1 Kings xii. 16.

The case of the family of the Stuarts is exactly in point here. This family was hurled from the throne of Britain, and obliged to take refuge in foreign countries, after oppressing the people, and cruelly persecuting them, especially on account of religion.

It is impolitic in the civil government of any country, to indulge in any species of persecution. The perpetuity of governments depend upon their ruling in equity, without respect of persons, and in dealing out their protection with impartiality. This will secure the esteem

and attachment of the subjects. Whilst persecution, under whatever name, becomes the most criminal and dangerous, when directed against a righteous, praying people; or what the Bible terms *The people of God.* It is worthy of observation, that scarcely any government ever treated these with cruelty, and remained long without some signal proof of the displeasure of Jehovah. Pharaoh and the taskmasters, the first government persecutors we read of in the Bible, were overwhelmed in the Red Sea.

The rich and powerful government of the Babylonian empire, was suddenly destroyed, and that in the midst of the greatest security, after captivating the posterity of Jacob, and keeping them in bondage; and while this government, at a drunken feast, was triumphing over the Hebrews, and insulting their God, when heated with wine, Belshazzar commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple at Jerusalem; that the king and his princes, his wives and his concubines, might drink therein. And while they drank out of these vessels, which had been dedicated to the only true God, as if in triumph over him, they praised their own idol-gods, which were made of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone. But in that hour, the visible hand, of an otherwise invisible agent, wrote over against the candlestick, upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace, *God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it:—Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.* And in that same night was Belshazzar slain, and Darius, the Median, took the kingdom. By this memorable transfer of power, did the Almighty open the way for the restoration of his chosen people, to the enjoyment of liberty and their religious privileges.

The most powerful of all governments that ever existed, that of the Romans, did not stand long after it persecuted, afflicted, and tormented the church of God. At the time the church of Christ was founded, that mighty and extensive empire had been growing in size and in splendour, for more than seven hundred years: but when it set itself against the truth, and the people of God, it was afflicted with many calamities, and was

soon destroyed by cruel barbarians. And what is the present state of the Popedom, which has shed the blood of so many of God's saints? Where is that Spanish government that maintained uniformity in religion, or rather in superstition and error, by the inquisition, tortures, and death? And where is the power of the family of the Capets, or Bourbons which so long and so grievously oppressed and slaughtered the Protestants in France? The fall of that persecuting house, has been almost as tragical and memorable, as have been its cruel oppressions of the people of God. Gibbon, and other infidels, may endeavour to assign other causes for "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire;" half-papists may see no hand of God in the humiliation, or even annihilation of the Popedom; the French Revolution may be wholly ascribed, by mere politicians, to the deistical disciples of Voltaire, and Republicanism; the dethronement of the king of Spain, may be imputed to the boundless ambtion, and matchless treachery, of the present Ruler of France; but every man who fully believes, and properly considers the bible, will be prepared to acquiesce in a declaration similar to that of our Saviour to Pilate, namely, that the instruments of such revolutions and dethronements, could have no power to do these things, except it had been given them from above. John xix. 11. God has a principle hand, and sometimes a vengeful hand, in all great changes in nations and dynasties: "For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south: but God is the Judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; it is full of mixture; and he poureth out of the same: but the dregs thereof, all the wicked of the earth shall wring them out, and drink them." Psalm lxxv. 6, 7, 8.

Meantime, "the liberal man," and especially the liberal governor," deviseth liberal things; and by liberal things shall he stand." Isa. xxxii. 8. Who can doubt for a moment, that the liberal and tolerating spirit which has been so uniformly displayed by the family which now wears the crown of Britain, has very materialy contributed to make it remain firmly seated upon the throne,

while so many surrounding princes have been hurled from their elevated seats.

Further, whatever is of God, will stand by its own strength, and with the protection of heaven, without any coercive or violent aid: and on the other hand, no work, or cause of God, can be effectually overturned by any power whatsoever. Meantime, it is an awful thing to be found fighting against God yea, even when men, like Saul of Tarsus, do it ignorantly, and because they think they ought so to do. Acts xxvi. 9. 1 Tim. i. 13.

The subject of Religious Liberty is so interesting, that I enlarge this part of the work much beyond my previous intention. New ideas are suggested, which I think sufficiently important to insert. *Toleration* has been distinguished into *complete*, and *partial*. It is *complete*, when in addition to Religious Liberty, the subject is allowed to enjoy every privilege and office belonging to the civil government. It is *partial*, when the subject is put under some political incapacity, though he may be allowed to enjoy his religious liberty in the fullest extent. A government that does not allow one of these sorts of Toleration, cannot be maintained without *force*. But there are many unanswerable arguments to be urged against employing force, in matters of faith, modes of worship, or forms of religious discipline.

Force is *unsuitable* to the subject. True religion depends upon conviction; and all rational conviction depends upon evidence. But external force, whatever it may do to the body, can do nothing towards producing such a conviction. Nay, an attempt thus to insult and force our understanding, would naturally tend to the contrary way. Our Saviour gives no countenance to such an exercise of the civil power for the promotion of even truth and righteousness. "My kingdom," said he, "is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight." John xviii. 36. "The weapons of the Christian's warfare, are not carnal, but mighty through God." 2 Cor. x. 4. Force is so far from assisting a man to get a proper understanding of divine truth, that it tends to prevent the necessary inquiries. The dread of the inquisition, or other pains, or penalties, has often detered the timid from a proper

examination of the truths of the gospel. And, on the other hand, perhaps in no one instance, did these things tend to produce a proper understanding of the truths which are after godliness.

When a man attempts to propagate his own system of religion, by force, it furnishes a very strong argument against it. It is from weakness rather than strength of argument, that a man has recourse to compulsion. It is generally the man who has the wrong side of an argument, who loses his temper first; and, perhaps, it is *always* the party least in the right that has recourse to coercive measures. At any rate, force is unnecessary to propagate truth, for "truth is great, and will prevail."

The experience which every truly Christian man has of his own ignorance and liability to err, will dispose him to exercise charity and forbearance towards those who differ from him in sentiment, and incline him to follow the advice of the apostle, 2 Tim. ii. 25. "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth."

While *force* cannot propagate either truth or holiness, it powerfully tends to make hypocrites. Persecution destroys, or depresses, men of principle and integrity, and affords the most powerful temptations to hypocrisy and apostacy; encourages the worst of men; and gives the children's bread unto dogs. A noble army of martyrs have, in various ages and nations, remained steadfast and immoveable, and sometimes have endured torture, not accepting deliverance, Heb. xi. but in too many instances the fear of suffering has induced men to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.

Intolerance, or persecution, for they are both the same, has often produced wars, or commotions, in different countries: this was the case in Germany at the time of the reformation; in France, when a civil war commenced under the reign of Charles the Ninth, and continued for near thirty years; and in the Low-Countries, which terminated in the deliverance of Holland from the civil and ecclesiastical tyranny of Spain.—This same spirit had no small share in exciting the civil war in our own country, which produced such lamentable consequences.

This narrow coercive spirit, has a tendency to impoverish, and even to depopulate a country. Men who are denied liberty in their native country, will be inclined to seek for it elsewhere. And our Saviour's indulgent direction is, "when they persecute you in one city," or country, "flee to another." Consequently, when there was a persecution at Jerusalem, about Stephen, many of the Christians sought an asylum in distant countries. Acts xi. 19.

The persecuted may not go off in large bodies, or all at once. But many of them are sure to go, when circumstances, under Providence, shall point out the way. The state will be drained of its best citizens, though perhaps gradually, and almost insensibly; and the loss will be the more sensibly felt, as foreigners will not be inclined to put themselves under a government that would enslave the very soul as well as the body. History affords striking illustrations of the truth of this observation, from Spain, France, and other countries, where persecution, or impolitic intolerance have reigned. The proscribed inhabitants left their native country, and carried into other lands those arts and manufactures with which they were not permitted to enrich their own. Similar causes will produce similar effects, wherever the same spirit is suffered to prevail. *Before* persecution, the land is as the garden of Eden, and *behind* it a desolate wilderness.

Intolerance is exceedingly degrading to national character. Every persecuting government of former times, comes down to us in the page of history under a stigma. And Egypt, in which was probably the first *national* persecution, was laid under a heavy and lasting curse, from which it is not yet delivered. Strangers have ruled over it, and it has been for many ages the basest of all kingdoms. Ezek. xxix. 15.

And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, was doomed to be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and principally, because of the oppressions and miseries which the Babylonians had heaped upon the seed of Jacob, who were then God's visible church. The very name of Babylon is handed down to us loaded with infamy. And those they made to serve with hard bon-

dange, are directed, in holy triumph over their persecutors, to say, "How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!" &c. Isa. xiv. 4—19.

Mankind have an equal right to uncontrolled liberty of conscience, that is, a right to think and choose for themselves, in every thing purely religious. It is the unalienable birthright of every human being to choose his own religion, and to worship God as he thinks the best. God never gave any man, or number of men, authority to deprive any person whatsoever of this right. And yet, how often has this been attempted; and sometimes even in England. This was done particularly by the *Act of Uniformity, and the Act against conventicles.* Both these disgrace the statute-book, and are a stain upon the former legislators of Britain. It is hoped, that a system so narrow, unjust, impolitic, and cruel, will never be revised. But of this we have no absolute certainty. The spirit of persecution, in some form, exists in every country; and so long as this continues to be the case, the principles of equal liberty, religious as well as civil, will need to be studied, inculcated, and asserted.

Many are ashamed to defend general persecution, but call our attention to the act of Toleration, as if all our rights were to be proved from it. Whereas that did not *create* any right, but merely declared that Englishmen should enjoy, at least, some part of their rights. And if that act has not provided for the full, equal, unrestrained liberty of every man, in matters purely religious, it will only prove that it ought to be extended, and not contracted. We do not *prove* our rights by that act; but only *claim* them as far as that act will enable us. But those who passed that act had no authority to make it the exact measure of the liberty which should always be enjoyed in England.

In fact, all ideas of toleration spring from the supposition of an authority which cannot be proved. All men are equally accountable to the Supreme Judge. And the notion of an authority to tolerate, implies equally a notion of a power to prohibit. But in what way can such an authority be proved? In nothing is the Bishop of Rome more justly the object of our indignation, than

in his claiming dominion over conscience, as to articles of faith, and forms of worship and discipline. The property, influence, wisdom, and even piety of any man, do not empower him to thrust himself in between God and the immortal souls of men; and to usurp dominion over mens faith and religious practice. And whatever name may be given to such interference, Mr. Charles Wesley has justly observed, "'Tis Babel, Antichrist, and Pope, and Devil."

As yet, the Methodists have been content and thankful. They revere and love the king, and have great confidence in his justice and royal protection. But it is said, "Something *must* be done to check the alarming spread of Methodism." If Methodism be an evil, it ought to be checked; but if it be a good thing, no man can attempt to check it, without being found fighting against God. And "let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth," let one earthly brittle government go to war with another; but "wo to the man who contendeth with his Maker," by opposing the instruction, reformation, and salvation of mankind, through the instrumentality of a preached gospel. What right have you to say, This ought to be done only in a church? Shew me the passage of Scripture, that gives the slightest countenance to such an idea. For any thing written in the Bible, the Methodist preachers have as much *divine* authority for acting as they do, as the clergy have for their conduct.

This principle of doing something *to check the growth* of Methodism, is the very same that Pharaoh and the task-masters acted upon, as may be seen, Exodus, chapter i. But the plan did not eventually succeed. For, though the people of God may be harassed and oppressed; still they will be found the *bush*, which though burning in the fire, cannot be consumed. For, when oppressors obtain a momentary triumph over them, God overrules even that for the furtherance of the gospel, the promotion of his own glory, and the overthrow of persecutors. It is upon this ground, that I console myself with a hope, that should the enemies of religious liberty, and of the Methodists, be permitted by a mysterious Providence to narrow the act of toleration, by

making some new restrictive laws, it will be overruled for the accomplishment of some gracious design of God in conferring the greatest blessings upon mankind.

It is a striking circumstance, that just at the time when general liberty of conscience is established upon the continent of Europe, when the Pope is dethroned and banished from Rome, when the inquisition is drawing its last horrid gasp in Spain and Portugal, that men should be found, even in England, which has so long been the asylum of civil and religious liberty, who are forging chains for the most harmless, peaceable, and useful body of people in the nation. And it is to be attempted, it seems, in conformity with the plan of all persecutors of ancient times, namely, to guard religion against what would injure or disgrace it! They have put on the face of a lamb; but if they can succeed in their enterprize, the act will be that of a lion. "Something," say they, "is needful to be done: but we intend nothing contrary to a wise and enlightened toleration."

Much has often been said upon the subject of *Toleration.* Let us examine it. To worship God in any particular way, must be either *right or wrong.* If it be right, it must be agreeable to God. And when a thing is agreable to God, is your displeasure, or the want of your license, or toleration, sufficient to make it wrong? Presumptuous, sinful mortal! And, it is fairly implied, that even God himself shall not have rendered to him what is right, and agreeable to him, without your permission! The idea of toleration looks both to the *worshipper* and *worshipped.* Had this always been attended to, some acts of toleration would have struck men with horror. Suppose, for instance, some hearty, but unthinking friend, in the present circumstances, (1811) should move in parliament, for leave to bring in a bill, to tolerate Almighty God to be worshipped in buildings unconsecrated by bishops, and to allow him to be prayed to, and spoken of, in dwelling-houses, and even in the highways, and in the streets and lanes of cities and towns; who would not be struck with horror at the profaneness of such a motion! Yet, this is implied, directly or indirectly, in all proposals for toleration in matters of religion.

Upon due consideration, it would appear, that there really have been men who have seriously conceived the idea of conferring favours and liberties upon the Almighty, in matters belonging to religious worship.—Look into the celebrated *Magna Charta*, or *The Great Charter* of England, made in the Ninth year of King Henry the third, and confirmed by King Edward the first, in the five and twentieth year of his reign. Copied from "Statutes at large," vol. i. The latter part of the preamble says, "Know ye, that we, unto the honour of Almighty God, and for the salvation of the souls of our progenitors and successors, Kings of England, &c. of our mere and free will, have given and granted these liberties following:—

"First, WE HAVE GRANTED TO GOD, *and by this our present Charter have confirmed*, for us and for our heirs for ever, that the church of England shall be free, and shall have all her whole rights and liberties inviolable."

Is not every man struck with horror at the arrogance of a poor sinful worm taking upon himself, in the plenitude of his bounty and condescension, to make GRANTS unto the author of his being and every blessing, the high and the lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity! And if the arrogant presumption of man, can induce him to think, that he has conferred favours upon, or made GRANTS to Almighty God, then surely he must expect the Almighty will one day acknowledge the obligation, and return him thanks.

Our Saviour's well known words are decisive in this case; "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." *Cæsar*, or the Roman emperor, was their supreme civil governor, and included all the subordinate governors, as they all derived their authority from him, and acted under him. And what things were his? and what things are belonging to civil governors in general? Why,

1. They have a right to "*tribute*," or taxes. As they have to pay the expenses of governing and protecting their respective empires, which government and protection were instituted for the general benefit of the inhabitants, it is right that they should each pay a reasonable share of the expenses. And I will venture

to say, that the Methodists pay their share of taxes, at least as faithfully and cheerfully as any church people, in the same ranks and circumstances of life.

2. As money alone will not enable Cæsar, or the civil power, to govern and protect the empire, men bearing arms will also be wanted. And do the Methodists refuse to take their share in the regular or local militia? And do they not, in this branch of public service, acquit themselves with as much care and propriety as any churchman?

I must observe, 3. That they do not refuse to pay tithes, or other church-rates; nor have they any design to abolish or alienate these revenues of the clergy.—Can Cæsar desire any thing more? Can he *demand* any thing more, without *demanding* "the things which are God's?" Here it is needful to observe, first, the civil government has no right to *command* what is contrary to the commandments of God, even in what relates to the body, our fellow-creatures, and the present world.—Secondly, civil governors have no right at all to interfere between God and the souls of men. Civil government and religion, are two things which ought to be totally separate from each other. Yet, if governors choose to have a certain religion of their own, and to call it the religion of the nation, I shall not oppose them, and hope they will allow me the same liberty they claim for themselves. Were I a governor, I should want nothing more from my subjects. And if they were subjects who are now governors, I believe they would want nothing less than what I am contending for as a general right.

Will the persons who want to prescribe to me what opinion I shall believe, the form in which I shall worship God, and the rules of church government, by which they wish me to be regulated, undertake to answer for me at the day of judgment, and to ensure my eternal salvation, provided I comply with their wishes? And, if they should *undertake* this, can I, with confidence and due security, leave the matter in their hands?

Let human governors "*study to be quiet*, and mind their own business," and rest assured that the Almighty will mind his. Let them rule in the fear of the

Lord in civil affairs, and prove themselves to be the ministers of God for good. Meantime, without their obtrusive interference, the ark of God will be upheld, the heavenly King will rule in Zion, and the world will witness, that he who keepeth Israel neither slumbereth nor sleepeth.

If, from the day of Pentecost to the present time, Christianity had been left to itself and its Author, *unhelped* as well as *unhindered* by human authority, what would have been the state of the church of Christ, and of the world at large this day? Human authority in matters of religion has, in ten thousand instances, been the worm at the root of the gourd. And in how many instances has it been of any real service to religion? Let God and the devil, truth and error, fight it fairly out, and victory will declare itself on the right side.

It is of importance to remark, that while our Saviour's apostles, in imitation of their master, "rendered to Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's," they paid no attention to Cæsar in matters of religion. Nay, they never so much as waited or sought for an act of toleration, or a license from any court, to qualify them, to "go into all the world, to preach the gospel to every creature," either in Judea, (where there was an established church, and one established by God himself,) at Antioch, at Ephesus, Corinth, or any other place which they visited.

Had such an act of government existed, and been conformed to, in Judea, and the other countries where the gospel was planted by the apostles, as that which some have mentioned, the glad tidings of salvation had never been published to the world. Read the New-Testament, and the Acts of the Apostles especially, and then say, whether the gospel could have been propagated at all.

1. If no person had been allowed to preach, but those who did nothing else, the apostle Paul himself must have been silent; for he often wrought at tent-making.

2. If no person had been "allowed to preach to more than *one* congregation," nor to that without a license, the gospel could not have been propagated, and

the world had still remained in darkness and the shadow of death.

3. Had a certificate of their character been required, a petition for their license to preach, and that even before they had preached in any place, they could never have gone "into all the world, and preached the gospel to every creature." The apostles had no certificate from the rulers of Jerusalem, nor did they seek for any such authority. The case would have been the same, if it had been enacted, "that there shall be no preaching except in some place built for the purpose." Hardly ever did the apostles preach in a place of this description; nor Jesus Christ, except a few times. Enraged as the devil was, at the first spread of truth and righteousness, and numerous and active as priests were, both Jewish and Pagan, it is surprising that no person was employed to carry such an antichristian plan into execution.

Lord S—— has said, "*So many unfit persons take upon them to preach, that he feared for the understanding of the country.*" But, I appeal to the nation at large, whether those who have attended the preaching of the Methodists be increased or decreased in understanding: and whether they are inferior or superior in understanding to church people in the same ranks in society, and of the same degrees of education. I ask this especially, as it respects understanding on spiritual subjects: for if this preaching has darkened or perverted the understanding of the hearers of it in any thing, it must be upon that subject which these preachers confine all their attention and discourse to. Can any person bring forward an equal number of church people, of the same ranks in society, and of the same degrees of education, who will be found more able to converse upon all the essential doctrines of the Christian religion? The Methodists, with all their reputed ignorance, have nothing to dread from a comparison of this nature.

The way in which some statesmen and divines speak upon the subject of toleration, conveys the idea, that they think it a special act of kindness, to permit any thing in religion but what they fully approve of. But, liberty of conscience is the common and equal right of

all. This ought not to be considered as a thing enjoyed upon mere *sufferance*. There are some roads, which are used upon mere *sufferance*, but which the proprietors may stop when they choose: while common roads are equally the property of all who choose to travel them. Now the path of unrestrained liberty of conscience, is no road to be travelled upon mere sufferance. Let those who think otherwise prove their opinion from the scriptures.

Should any one say, "that even upon the most public roads, there are turnpike-gates which the traveller must wait at, and pay for the opening of;" I answer, that is in consequence of certain persons undertaking to improve the roads, and keep them in repair. But, the road to heaven cannot be improved, nor can any man undertake to keep it in repair. Besides, of *this* road, no "commissioners" have been appointed, nor gate-renters engaged. Here is a strait gate, and a narrow way; but no persons have been employed to tend the one or mend the other. Meantime, persons of different sentiments, modes of worship, and religious connexions, may enter the gate, and walk in the way. And no authority can be proved from scripture, to belong to a minister of an established church, as a surveyor, or controller of the way, any more than to any other ministers. Rather, we might say, they are all equally excluded. The road is made; it never wants mending; and it has no surveyor, controller, or superintendent, but HE who is the WAY, as well as the truth and the life. There is a way, a high way, and it shall be called *The way of holiness.*

Whatever absurdity or impropriety there may be attached to the idea of toleration, no blame attaches to the present royal family of Britain. The Toleration Act was passed between twenty and thirty years before the house of Hanover ascended the throne of these realms. At the time of enacting that statute, and also before and after that period, the universal right of liberty touching religion, was but imperfectly understood. It is to the honour of the reigning family, that they have never manifested the smallest desire to infringe upon religious liberty; and that any changes which may

have taken place upon this point in the laws of the land, have all been on the favourable side. The Methodists are very sensible of, and grateful for, the never failing attention of the King to their rights, when application has been made to him. As circumstances were when the Brunswick family began their reign in England, and have continued since, they could not well have attempted to do more in favour of liberty of conscience than they have done.

The inconsistency of the charges of the clergy against the Methodist preachers must not pass totally unnoticed.

They have generally and long pretended to despise the Methodist preachers, as being few, but especially as being so insignificant, so ignorant, and every way unqualified and insufficient to make any great impression on the public at large, or ever obtain any greater, general influence. But the present general outcry seems to speak a great change of sentiment. The idea perpetually held up to the public, and vociferated from Dan to Beersheba is, that the Methodist preachers are so formidable, and so rapidly becoming more and more terrific to these learned and duly qualified gentlemen, that unless the temporal sword come forth to their assistance, very shortly a few persons, which they call "ignorant mechanics," or "insufficient and unauthorized teachers," will lay all the power, honours, and influence of archbishops, bishops, and 18,000 clergymen, which they represent as the most pious, rational, learned, and valuable men in the world, in the dust. But if either of these ideas be true, if the Methodist preachers be so contemptible from their want of abilities, or if so numerous a body as the clergy, be so very respectable, and every way fitted for the work of the ministry, and permanent influence, this alarm must be ill founded. Let them take which side of the argument they like best: but both sides they cannot take without flagrant contradiction.

There are nearly forty times as many clergy of the established church in England as there are itinerant Methodist preachers. Surely forty learned and respect-

able clergymen, aided by the temporal sword, must be more than a match for one Methodist preacher.

Had the doctrines of the Methodists been contrary to those of the church of England, and even contrary to the Bible, no person can show any scriptural authority for interfering in religious opinions, nor even in modes of worship. And should they say, truth ought to be defended, and error opposed, I ask, Who made them rulers or judges in such matters? Whatever may be wrong in the church of Christ, whether in doctrine or discipline, it is not the business of the civil power, but of the church itself, to rectify the same. Or, if what is wrong cannot be rectified, then to perform such acts of discipline as the case may require. And here the utmost care will be necessary to avoid blind, rash, or intemperate zeal, and to let pure unadulterated scripture, in the hands of Christian charity, direct and guide. To insist upon the contrary, is to have recourse to the arguments, or rather the fallacies of the church of Rome, in opposition to every branch and stage of the reformation. Scripture alone ought to be appealed to, and every man be allowed the right of forming his own opinion as to its genuine meaning.—And unless some human beings did *really* possess what the Pope had so long falsely *pretended* to, namely, *infallibility*, and *the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, no man has a right to dictate to another. In this point of privilege, "no one is before or after another." And as every man must give an *account* of himself, so every man should *judge* for himself.

Of late years, the Methodists have attracted much public attention, and the clergy of the established church have appeared to be alarmed at the rapid spread of Methodism. This alarm has been proclaimed in numerous publications from the press. These fears of the clergy appear to have been infused into some members of Parliament. A purpose to enact some restrictive statute, which might prevent the increase of Methodists and Dissenters, has been announced. But the persons who have engaged in the business have appeared very much at a loss in what way to proceed. Doubtless they wish to do something, and something very se-

rious too; but they seem not to know how to go about it, without exciting an alarm. They fear the effect which such a measure might produce, especially in such times as the present. There can be little doubt that this has been the chief, if not the sole cause why the business has not been formally brought forward before now. My opinion is, that Providence has permitted certain convulsions and distresses for the preservation of his own people. The weapon, it is believed, has been formed and prepared against them, during some years. But something has still happened, to fill the hands of those who were disposed to strike, with other work, and their hearts with doubtful apprehensions, so that the business has been repeatedly postponed to a more convenient season. And if those who fear God, and call upon his name, continue to cry day and night unto Him, the Lord who saved Israel from the execution of the cruel designs of Haman and his associates, will screen them from all the crafts and assaults of men and devils. Here is the great and effectual resource of the genuine Christian when threatened with danger. My Christian brethren, "trust in the Lord at all times;" "continue in prayer," and "no weapon formed against you shall prosper, but every tongue which rises in judgment, he shall condemn."

If any proposal should at last be seriously brought forward in order to abridge our religious liberties, I think it probable it will be considerably narrowed and fritted down from what certain circumstances led us to expect. The *whole* measure, in all its original parts, may be deemed impracticable, at least at *the present*. But when this softened measure shall have somewhat settled upon the stomach, something more may be done, and that, perhaps, under the pretence of explaining and amending the former act. It is evident there is a great unwillingness to be explicit as to what is intended or desired to be done.

The active persons in this business will probably avow themselves the friends of toleration; and perhaps may go so far as to say, they believe the measure will meet the approbation of the general body of Dissenters. But such declarations should be received with suspi-

cion, or at least with great caution. For (1.) it has been the general practice of those who have exerted themselves against religion, in whatever age or nation, to make pretensions of friendship and zeal for religion. They have generally, if not always pretended, that they only wanted to check dangerous and growing evils, and to secure orthodoxy and order. (2.) Those who profess friendship to the dissenters, would give better proofs of their sincerity in such professions, by letting them alone. But such declarations are thought to be convenient for allaying suspicion, and lulling the intended victims asleep, till the fetters be quite ready for putting on, or the mine be prepared for springing.

(3.) It is possible that some one denomination of Dissenters would be glad if restrictions were put upon other denominations. Suppose, for instance, those whose ministers uniformly pass through an academical training, or some of those who have a settled ministry among them, might be pleased to see a law made to prohibit every thing of a contrary description. And if the design which is in contemplation should be carried into execution, one sort of Dissenters may be left untouched, and perhaps be flattered, till the others be bound hand and foot. Dissenters of every denomination should be aware of this, and unitedly oppose every infringement upon our present liberties. For if an infringement take place in one instance, it may then be the more easy to make another and another, till liberty or toleration may almost cease to exist except in name.

(4.) If Lord S—— be really desirous of preventing or removing improprieties in the Christian ministry, let him turn his first attention to the clergy of the established church. Are there no defects there as to "age, capacity, or character?" *Physician heal thyself.* "First cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast the mote out of thy brothers eye."

As to *age*, the New-Testament fixes no particular age under which a man may not preach. The law of Moses says something upon this head, but I apprehend that is not binding upon Christians. And it is full as peremptory respecting being *too old* as *too young;* there-

fore a priest was not to officiate after he was fifty years old. Of the two, the being *very young*, is far more tolerable than being *too old*. The young man will be mending of this imperfection every day, while the old man's defects will every day increase. Besides, should we adopt the Mosaic regulations respecting *age* in those who minister in holy things, insuperable objections will be raised against most of those who are made bishops. Few of these put on the mitre till they are more than fifty years of age. If it be said, "they do not attempt to preach much;" I answer, so much the worse. *Unpreaching prelates* have always been considered by the wisest and best of men, as serious evils.—The examination of candidates for the ministry, the rejection of improper ones, and ordination of those who are fitted for the work and office, must be allowed to be very important, and to require the full vigour and exercise of the intellectual powers as much as any thing done by the priests in the tabernable or the temple.

When objection is made to the *capacity* of some Methodist preachers and Dissenting ministers, I have no scruple in affirming, that even the feeblest among them will suffer no disgrace from a comparison with some of the clergy of the establishment.

But "the chief object," says Lord S——, "which I have in view, is to require from a person intending to act under a license, a certificate from the congregation or sect to which he belongs, that he is a competent person, in their opinion, to the discharge of the duties of a preacher, and that it is at their recommendation he applies for the license." This is intended for the purpose of throwing obstacles in the way of Dissenters.—It is true, it would be easy for most of those who apply for licenses to obtain such certificates. But the whole scheme implies such an acknowledgment of human authority in matters of religion, as is inconsistent with the word of God. And might we not say, that if Dissenting ministers and Methodist preachers should have such a certificate in order to be licensed, would it not be equally proper that candidates for episcopal ordination should have something similar? And ought not all

who are made rectors, vicars, &c. to have such a certificate from the parishes they are appointed to.

Many persons will not see, or at least will not admit, what are the real causes of the increase of Dissenters and Methodists. These, I have estimated, are the making men Christian ministers who are not Christians; the defective plan of appointing them to their respective charges; and the lax discipline which so generally prevails.

Perhaps some may expect me to say something *on the influence of Methodism.* And. 1. Its influence on its own members. Out of the thousands, and tens of thousands, who have become Methodists, I believe there has not been one instance of any person becoming less moral in *consequence* of being a Methodist. There may have been a few instances of persons who have crept in among them, from unrighteous motives, whose morals have been exceptionable; but this was not the fault of Methodism. It was not an effect of which Methodism was the cause.

In ninety-nine out of a hundred, the change of morals for the better has been visible, and in many instances most remarkably striking. A noble lord dolorously observed, what an affecting sight it was to see so many insufficient teachers apply to the quarter sessions for licenses. But, if he would have proved Methodism to be a real and alarming evil, he should have been able to tell, what an astonishing number of Methodists were to be tried for riots, thefts, and other offences against the public welfare at the quarter sessions, and also at the assizes. But alas! he could not have mentioned this, without awakening the general recollection, that scarcely was there ever a Methodist brought to trial for felony, burglary, or grand or petty larceny, since Methodism had an existence. Some few persons of this offending description, and but a very few, may have had the name of Methodist. But in such cases, without a single exception, the name has either been given them wrongfully altogether, or they have been backsliders from Methodism. They are neither Methodists nor Dissenters, who fill our prisons, stand at the bar for trial at quarter sessions and assizes, swing upon our gallowses,

dwell on board the hulks, and are sent to people New-Holland. Among culprits, Methodists are never found; while among all the promoters of every institution for the public good, they frequently constitute the majority.

(2.) Methodism contributes to promote mental improvement. The Methodists very generally improve in useful knowledge, of other descriptions as well as religious. And as to the silly charge of Methodism turning people mad, it scarcely deserves notice. There is no demonination of people but have some insane people among them; witness the Quakers, who have a large mad-house near York, called "The Friends' Retreat," in which are many patients. But, of all the mad people in England, I dare venture to affirm, that ninety-nine out of every hundred are neither Methodists nor Dissenters. And in general, it was not religion, but something much worse than even enthusiasm, that brought on the delirium. It is not in the nature and tendency of true piety to make its votaries go mad, but rather to promote a sound mind and a good understanding.

(3.) Methodism powerfully tends to improve the temporal circumstances of those who have embraced it: religion at once promotes industry and frugality. The godly man sees the sinfulness of sloth; and he cannot, as formerly, spend his money in sinful gratifications, nor even in what some call innocent trifles. He considers himself a steward of the property he has in his hands, and that he must shortly account to God for it. And though his contributions to support and propagate religion may amount to something considerable, yet this is a trifle compared with the *temporal* advantages he derives from religion. Hence, it is a fact, which cannot with truth be denied, that the Methodists in general, are more rich than they were before they became such.

(4.) Under its influence, parents have restrained their children from wild and foolish conduct; have set them a good example, and instilled into them religious instruction: the same remark will apply to masters and servants.

(5.) The active concern of the Methodists has not

been confined to their own families. They have done more than all the other denominations of Christians, in establishing supporting, teaching, and encouraging Sunday-schools.

(6.) They have not only been among the foremost to aid every charity of previous establishment, but they have instituted new ones, and especially *The Benevolent Society*, for the relief of the sick poor in numerous places, and "*Strangers Friend Society*," for the relief of poor destitute strangers.

They have had a principal hand, both in establishing and supporting the Sunday-schools in most parts of the nation. These schools are principally taught by Methodists, and that gratuitously. And in some places the Methodists are among the principal supporters of charity-schools.

Methodism might expostulate with her enemies and persecutors, and say, "Many good works have I showed you: for which of those works do ye stone me?" John x. 32. And when these persecuters would rouse the civil magistrate to make use of force against the Methodists, he may justly ask, in the language of Pilate, "Why? what evil have they done?" Mark xv. 14—We may most truly say of Methodism, that she ought to be "well reported of for good works; that she has brought up children; has lodged strangers: has washed the saints feet; has relieved the afflicted; and has diligently followed every good work." 1 Tim. v. 10.—Methodism has fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and visited the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, nor has she neglected the sick, or the imprisoned. If men will not believe the doctrines of Methodism, let them at least give due honour to its beneficent influence.

A few of the more opulent and benevolent among the Methodists, some few years ago, thought that some of their own itinerant preachers were very proper objects of charity, especially such as had large families, no private property, in poor circuits, and visited with family sickness. These considerate and generous Christians, therefore, instituted what they termed "*The Preachers Friend Society.*"

To support this institution, individuals in different

parts of the nation, contributed half a guinea, a guinea, and some more, annually. A committee in London undertake the management of it, but neither the conference, nor any of the travelling preachers, have any thing to do with it. The committee get the best information they can respecting preachers who may be in distressed circumstances, and often surprize them by sending very seasonable relief. The committee publish an annual report of their receipts and disbursements, accompanied by extracts of letters received from preachers who have been relieved. Many of these extracts are very affecting, and calculated to make even "Misers wonder they should part with gold."

(7.) Methodism has had a great, and very beneficial effect upon the morals of the inhabitants of England at large, as well as Ireland. It has accomplished already, an extensive reformation. This has not been equal in all places. But its greatest enemies cannot deny, that a great change for the better has been effected in districts the most notorious for every vice. And as vice is perpetually progressive, it is impossible to form an adequate conception of the desperate state of wickedness they might have arrived at by this time, had it not been for this very efficacious remedy provided by a gracious God!

And is the nation arrived at such a pitch of reformation and piety, that there is no more occasion for the labours of men who have been so useful in the hand of God? Is there such general purity, righteousness, sobriety, among all ranks of men, from the least even unto the greatest, that gospel labours, which have been so successful, ought to be restrained, or contracted within narrow limits? In this cloudy and dark day," this day of the trumpet and alarm," is it seasonable, is it wise and politic, to fetter those who cry day and night to God, in behalf of their neighbours, the king and government, as well as the nation at large?"

It is with pleasure I this moment recollect the following anecdote:—Not many years ago, when one told our good king, that the Methodists prayed for him; the king answered, "I place more confidence in the prayers of my people, than in my fleets and armies." In

such cases, kings may be said to be nursing fathers, and queens, nursing mothers of the church of Christ. And, upon every occasion, thus far, the king has proved himself our firm friend, and has laid us under obligations to love and pray for him. But our *chief* dependence must be upon a higher Being. While we look up to the king, with all due confidence in his justice and piety, we must remember who it is that says, "*Trust not in princes, nor in any child of man: for there is no help in them.*" But while we fear God, duly honour and pray for the king, and commit our cause to him who is "*King* of *kings*, and *Lord* of *lords*," we have the best assurance of being able to sing, "THE LORD OF HOSTS IS WITH US, THE GOD OF JACOB IS OUR REFUGE." Amen.

APPENDIX.

LONDON, FEB. 24th, 1812.

To the Superintendent of the Circuit.

DEAR SIR,

THE General Committee of Privileges are informed by letters, from various parts of the country, that considerable uneasiness has been excited by the refusal of Magistrates to administer the oaths, under the Act of Toleration, to several of our preachers, and by the threatenings of some persons to enforce the penalties of the conventicle and other obsolete acts, on our peaceable societies.

The Committee, therefore, think it necessary to address a Circular Letter to the Superintendents on the occasion: in the first place, to quiet the minds of our people; and secondly, to assure them that the members of the Committee, resident in London, are anxiously watching over their concerns, and neglecting nothing which appears necessary to be done, in order to secure a continuance of those inestimable privileges which have proved so highly beneficial to our Societies, and so much promoted the happiness and prosperity of the British nation.

As a People, we can appeal to God for the sincerity and purity of our motives; and we can as confidently appeal to our Country for the great success of our exertions. God has greatly improved the state of society by the labours of our Preachers, and multitudes, who were as destitute of true religion as of the principles of loyalty, have become, under their teaching, genuine Christians, useful members to the community, and firm friends to the Laws, to their King, and to their Coun-

try. And although, like the primitive Christians, we are traduced and slandered by an ungodly world, who wilfully shut their eyes against the light, and by many who might know better, but for their determined prejudices; yet we can rejoice with the Apostle, "in the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world;" and we may say to our adversaries, of the great work wrought among us, that if this counsel, or this work, had been of men, it would long ere this have come to nought; but seeing it is so evidently of GOD, they cannot overthrow it, and those who attempt it will probably be found fighting against GOD.

As many of our friends in the country wish for directions how to act under present circumstances, we say, Go on in the name of the Lord, just as you have done—fearing God—honouring the King—working righteousness—and endeavouring by all means to persuade sinners to flee from the wrath to come.

We most heartily respect the laws of our country, but we hold it as a most sacred and unalienable right of conscience, that every man should be allowed to teach the eternal verities of our Holy Religion to all who are willing to be taught by him; and although all well-regulated Societies and denominations of Christians will exercise their own rules for the admission of public or private teachers among themselves, yet we most tenaciously disclaim all right of the civil magistrate to interfere in these sacred matters, while our teachers are acting in obedience to the laws in all other respects, and preaching the sound doctrines of the purest morality, according to the Holy Scriptures.

We are therefore, decidedly and unanimously of opinion, that our Preachers, Class Leaders, Prayer Leaders, Exhorters, Visitors of the Sick, Sunday School Teachers, &c. &c. should go on as usual, in their respective duties.

Places for Public Worship should be registered as heretofore; but if any persons should imbibe a persecuting spirit, and choose to levy penalties on any of our unoffending people, we recommend that the latter should

suffer distress on their goods, or imprisonment of their persons, rather than pay any penalties for worshiping God agreeably to the dictates of their consciences.

If however, we should be called to suffer, let us suffer in a Christian Spirit, in all meekness; praying for our enemies, ever remembering, that if we even give our bodies to be burned, and have not Charity, it profiteth us nothing. Hence let us not act in a spirit of strife or vain glory, but "in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance, to the acknowledging of the truth."

The Members of our Committee resident in London, are very active; and although some of our friends in the country have complained that nothing was doing, because they heard not from us, yet every prudential measure has been adopted which was deemed necessary.—Some trials are pending before the Court of King's Bench, respecting the refusal of Magistrates to qualify Preachers, which will be decided next Term, in the months of April and May.

We can hardly suppose, that all the late proceedings of Magistrates can be supported, but till the law on this subject be fully ascertained, we do not wish to propose any measures which might needlessly agitate the public mind.

In order to consult the disposition of His Majesty's Government, a Deputation of the Committee have waited on the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Perceval, who very politely and patiently attended to a statement of our case and situation. It was scarcely to be expected that Mr. Perceval could offer any decided opinion on the means of relief to be afforded, if any should be found necessary, till the Law be completely settled; but we are happy to state that we were assured, that *His Majesty's Government will not sanction any kind of religious persecution or intolerance;* and indeed it must be obvious, that it would be the height of indiscretion for any Government to attempt to destroy Religious Liberty, when it has taken such firm and extensive root as in this country, and where it has been so very beneficial to the *State*, as well as to the individuals: for it has been the grand means of uniting the hearts of

His Majesty's subjects to his Person and Government, on the purest principles, and with the most steady and ardent affection.

The vast number of members of our Societies and Congregations, and of other denominations of Christians, bear such a great proportion to the population of the country, that any general measures to abridge religious liberty would, at all times, and more especially in the present, be attended with very serious results. We should therefore, even as lovers of our country, as well as lovers of the cause of God, pray earnestly for the peace of Zion: and the practical effects of any uneasiness which may have been excited, should lead us to teach our Societies the inestimable value of our privileges, and to supplicate God for his grace more than ever to improve them; and that we may not, as a people, forfeit our liberties by our misimprovement, nor learn their true value by their loss.

If circumstances should arise to render it necessary again to apply to Government, or ultimately to Parliament, the Committee will not fail to use every prudential measure which may be judged expedient; and they sincerely desire an interest in the prayers of the people, that they may be directed to act aright. In the meantime they would recommend our friends not to join in any petitions to Parliament, unless they receive official communications from their Committee; and we would most earnestly request, that neither preachers nor people will publish any thing on the subject, unless it be first proposed to the Committee, who have certainly, from their general information, the best means of judging of the expediency of any measures to be adopted. But the Committee invite, and will most gladly receive, any hints from their friends in the country, and avail themselves of every offer of service in the great cause for which they are so zealously engaged.

It is extremely desirable to prevent the clashing of a diversity of opinions and operations, and it is absolutely necessary to preserve an union of sentiment, in order to secure united exertions; and while the Committee invite information on every subject of importance, which they beg may be particularly accurate in all its

details, they pledge themselves to communicate intelligence to their country friends from time to time, as it may be deemed necessary.

Committing the whole into His hands, who will rule and govern His church universal in the right way,

We are,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate Friends and Servants,

(Signed, by order of the Committee)

JOHN BARBER, *Chairman.*

JOS. BUTTERWORTH, *Secretary.*

N. B. If you think proper you will read this letter to the *Society*, and it may be a means of stirring them up to be more earnest in private prayer, and more diligent in all the means of grace.

RELIGIOUS TOLERATION.

"No man in this assembly more decidedly than myself abhors the spirit of religious intolerance in principle, or would more sensibly regret the least approximation to the practice of persecution.—Whilst I lament the deviation in doctrines amongst the various Dissenters from those of the established church, I cannot but look on them with that charity which is due to the opinions of well disposed and well meaning men in search of truth, in a matter of such momentuous importance to all. In this great work of inquiry and investigation, the contributions of each should be received, if not with gratitude, at least with indulgence. As it concerns all, it should be a source of continued occupation and reflection. *The sacred writings are the benificent gift of God to man: the interpretation therefore of scripture is the proper study and business of mankind.* By all Protestants, Dissenters, or of the Establishment, the sacred writings are considered to be the great standard of religious doctrine, and to embrace all the articles of our faith on earth, and our hopes of futurity. It is not wonderful

" therefore, when such universal interest is excited " throughout the whole mass of Protestants, that " their interpretation should be an object of the ut- " most anxiety. The interpretation of them howev- " er is unfortunately extremely liable to error, espe- " cially in speculative points of doctrine. Uniformi- " ty of religion therefore is not, nor cannot be ex- " pected; the minds of men are too differently con- " structed to enable them all to see even the same " things through the same medium. Coercion there- " fore can be of no avail in producing uniformity of " opinion, in matters of religion it must ever be con- " sidered unwise and impolitic, and by no means " calculated to produce the end which it is sought to " attain. Coercion has never been the practice of " the English established church, nor do I believe " it ever will."*

From the determinations of the Court of King's Bench, and several Courts of Quarter Sessions, the Act of Toleration has received a construction which shows that act to be insufficient for the protection of a great multitude of persons professing religion. It therefore becomes necessary to apply to Parliament for relief. To convey some information on this important subject, which excites such general interest, it has been thought proper to republish a Letter of the late lamented Chancellor of the Exchequer, together with the opinion of the Court of King's Bench, in the case of the King v. the Justices of Gloucestershire; also a Letter to the late Mr. Perceval; and the Conventicle and Five Mile Acts. From these it may in some degree be seen to what extent the relief should apply.

* The Archbishop of Canterbury's Speech in the House of Lords, on Viscount Sidmouth's Bill, May 21, 1811.

(COPY.)

Downing-street, April 10, 1811.

Sir,

Having had an opportunity in the course of the late recess, to consider with my colleagues the subject of your communication on the part of the Dissenters, I proceed to acquaint you, as I promised, with our opinion upon it.

It appears to us, that the interpretations recently given, at different Quarter Sessions, to those statutes under which Magistrates are authorised to grant Certificates to persons wishing to act as Dissenting Ministers, (and which interpretations, as far as they have hitherto undergone Judicial Decision, appear to be more correct constructions of these Laws, than those which heretofore prevailed in practice,) place the persons, who wish to obtain Certificates as Dissenting Ministers, in a situation so different from that in which the previous practice had placed them, as to require Parliamentary Interference and Relief, to the extent, at least, of rendering legal the former practice; and I shall, therefore, be willing, either to bring forward, or to support, an application to parliament for the purpose of affording such Relief.

Understanding, however, that a case is now pending in Judgment, before the King's Bench, upon the construction of some part of these Acts, it appears to me, that it will be desirable to postpone any direct application to the Legislature till that Decision shall explain the exact state of the law upon the point in dispute in that case. By postponing the application to Parliament till after the decision in that case, no such delay will be incurred as will prevent the application to Parliament in this Session, since the decision will, I believe, be pronounced upon it in the ensuing Term.

The precise mode of giving this relief, whether by the repeal of any existing Laws or by making the Act of the Magistrate purely ministerial, in administering the Oaths, and granting the Certificates, to such persons as may apply, is a matter which I wish to be understood as reserved for future consideration; but I

think it material to state, distinctly, that I understand the desire of the persons whom you represent to be this —that the Exemptions, to be conferred by such Certificates, from the Penalties to which such persons might otherwise be exposed for preaching, &c. should be universal to all who so qualify themselves; while the exemption from civil and military burdens or duties should be confined to those only who are Ministers of congregations, and who make the ministry so completely their profession, as to carry on no other business, excepting that of a schoolmaster.

As to the question respecting the liabilaty of Dissenting Chapels to the Poor Rates, I am convinced that the Dissenters must consider it as a subject of very inferior importance, both in effect and in principle.—On principle, I conceive, all that could be required would be, that the Chapels of Dissenters should be put precisely on the same footing as Chapels belonging to the Establishment; if they stand on any other footing, in point of legal liability at the present moment, (which, however, I do not understand to be the case,) I should be very ready to propose that the law in that respect should be altered.

If you wish for any further communication with me upon this subject, I shall be happy to appoint a time for seeing you.

I have the honour to be Sir,
Your most obedient humble Servant,
(Signed) SP. PERCEVAL.

To Mr. Butterworth, Fleet-street.

The JUDGMENT of the Court of King's Bench, on the Motion for a Mandamus, in the Case of the King, on the Prosecution of Thomas Standfast Brittan, versus *The Justices of Gloucestershire, 6th May,* 1812, *taken from the short-hand notes of Mr. Gurney.*

LORD ELLENBOROUGH,

It occurs to me, Mr. Topping, that we not only have no occasion, but that we cannot decide upon that

question, upon this application; this is an application for a Mandamus, in which the man swears himself to be one of the description of persons who are entitled to take these oaths, that he is a person pretending to Holy Orders. The refusal to admit him so to do, is upon the ground that he must be not only a person pretending to Holy Orders, but (upon some supposition that the Court have so decided) that he must also be a preacher or teacher of a congregation; now if the *Court* is not prepared to understand in that copulative sense the words of the Statute descriptive of the several different classes, all of whom are substantively entitled, if they come fairly and fully within the meaning of the Legislature, on a comparison of the terms applicable to each class, to take the oaths, it is unnecessary for us to consider the question further, inasmuch as the Magistrates have not denied that he bore that character, but have refused him only because they thought he must have a conjunct character of another sort, in order to entitle him as a person pretending to Holy Orders; but the meaning of the words 'pretending to Holy Orders,' whether it can in reason or in sense be understood to mean any thing beyond pretending to have Holy Orders, will be open to the Magistrates upon a Return to this Mandamus, if they think fit so to Return, to state and to explain; and in so thinking it proper that a Mandamus should go for the purpose of their making such Return, if they shall choose so to do, the *Court* is not only conducted to that conclusion by what has been done by their predecessors upon former occasions, but by a regard to the justice of the remedies the parties may have, if they shall be abridged of their rights; because, on a Return to the Mandamus, if they shall Return that he is not a person pretending to Holy Orders, and that that is synonymously, according to the construction in Cater's Case,* pretending to possess Holy Orders, if they shall return that in point of fact he is not a person pretending to have Holy Orders, and that he has no Orders of any description whatever, then it will be open to the party either to move to quash that Return, if they shall think it

*Skinner's Rep. 80.

insufficient, or to bring an action upon it, if they shall think it false in fact; and it does seem to the *Court*, on the authority of precedents of what their predecessors have done respecting other clauses of this Act, that it may be expedient with a view to justice, and to the ulterior remedy of the party, that that should be done in this case, because they may, in that case, put it upon the record, by bringing an action for a false Return, and then the construction of this Statute may go by appeal to every Court in Westminster Hall.

I do not mean to trouble you further, Mr. Topping, for the *Court* mean to make the Rule absolute. But I will just state what has been done by the *Court* upon this Statute. In a case in 6 Mod. 310, which was a motion made by Mr. King, then at the bar, but afterwards Lord King, for a Mandamus to the Justices of Warwickshire to admit one Peat to take the Oaths, in order to be qualified to teach a Dissenting Congregation; the words of Lord Chief Justice Holt were these. "The party ought to suggest whatever is necessary to entitle him "to be admitted, and if that be not done, or if it be done, and the fact be false, that will be good matter to return;" and the same in effect was said by Lord Mansfield in the Case of the King v. the Justices of Derbyshire, which has been refered to as reported in Sir William Blackstone; but it is full as well reported in 4 Burrow, 1991, and where what Lord Mansfield said at the close of the Case is reported, which it is not in Blackstone. His Lordship says, "no inconvenience can attend the Registering this Meeting-House. The Registry and Certificate do not prove that they are within the Act, they will still be obliged to show that they are within the requisite qualifications if called upon, notwithstanding the Register and Certificate; and if in fact they are not within the qualifications, the Justices may return that they are not, if they think proper to do so."

In this case, let it be distinctly understood, the parties apply under one specific description in the Toleration Act, as persons pretending to Holy Orders. The Justices enter into no consideration of the fact at the Sessions, whether they maintain that pretence accord-

ing to the fair construction of the Act, but admitting them to be persons pretending to Holy Orders, they object upon the ground alleged, that no person pretending to Holy Orders was entitled to take the Oaths, and to make and subscribe the Declaration and so on, unless he was also at the same time a preacher or teacher of a congregation of Protestant Dissenters. *That* they state as being the determination which has been lately made in this Court, but in which they are certainly mistaken; and they assign no other reason. His allegation, at the time of his Application, does not appear to have been traversed by them. We give them then the opportunity of traversing it, we give them the opportunity of returning, if they shall think fit so to do, that he is not such a person; so as to raise the question either upon the return, when the question upon the sufficiency of the return may be argued before the Court, or afterwards. Supposing the return should be sustained, and the Mandamus be rendered ineffectual in respect of the validity of the return, they may bring an action for a false return, by which the truth of the return may be brought in question.

Upon these grounds therefore, without pronouncing at present (because it is premature to pronounce) whether a person pretending to Holy Orders, must not be understood in all sense and meaning, to be a person pretending to the actual possession, and having the Holy Orders, respecting which, I should rather think that the persons pretending to Holy Orders, according to the best inquisition into the subject I have been able to make, were not entitled, generally to preach under any allowance; and when speaking on this subject, I will just mention that we have been referred to what passed in the times of the troubles; now, in the 52d Statute, in Scobell's Acts, it is said, that of the persons who expect Holy Orders, who are candidates for Holy Orders, none may preach but Ordained Ministers, except such as intending the Ministry, shall for trial of their gifts, be allowed by such as shall be appointed by both Houses of Parliament, which clearly does not mean a general and indefinite allowance to preach in respect of a self-designation to that profession, but they are to be

sanctioned by the allowance of persons constituted by authority, to give that allowance by both Houses of Parliament.—In the further consideration of this subject, it may be well worth the while of those, who argue that a pretence to Holy Orders implies the actual possession of Holy Orders, to look into those ordinances to see what was expected of persons in order to their being allowed to preach the Word of God. In page 80 of Scobell's Acts, it is presupposed that the Minister of Christ, is in some measure gifted for so weighty a service, by his skill in the original languages, and in such arts and sciences as are hand-maids unto Divinity; and by his knowledge in the whole body of theology: in times in which enthusiasm is supposed to have obtained as great a height, and literature to have been at its lowest ebb, it appeared to be fitting to those who managed the government in that perturbed state, that there should be these qualities in the persons pretending to the Ministry.—I throw this out for further consideration, when this matter may hereafter come under the consideration of the Court. At present we are of opinion this Mandamus cannot be resisted, because the right in which the person applies, has not been denied or drawn in question, it may questioned upon the return, and it is fit the Mandamus should go, in order that the Magistrates may have an opportunity of making that return, if they shall think fit.

RULE ABSOLUTE.

LONDON, May 7th, 1812.

To the Superintendent of the Circuit.

DEAR SIR,

The great question relative to the Act of Toleration, having occasioned the most anxious solicitude throughout our societies, we embrace the earliest opportunity of informing you, that the case of the King v. the Justices of Gloucestershire, which was expected to settle the point, was yesterday argued in the Court of King's Bench; but we are sorry to say, that the decision still

leaves us in a state of uncertainty as to the construction of the Act. The Court granted the Mandamus prayed for, but it was suggested that the Justices might make such a return as would bring the affair again before the Court, and probably that will be the case, which of course will leave our people in a state of painful anxiety, and expose them to inconvenience for a considerable period.

Under these circumstances, and the uncertainty as to the ultimate interpretation of the Law, which so materially affects our Preachers and Societies, and a great portion of the population of the kingdom, the Committee feel it necessary to make an immediate application to the Legislature for relief; and they will loose no time in taking measures accordingly.

The Committee think they are warranted in entertaining sanguine hopes that their application to Parliament will be attended with success; and as the recent decision may occasion much uneasiness in the country, the Committee consider it proper to subjoin the copy of a letter which they have sometime since received from the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Perceval, in answer to a former application made to him on this subject.

The explicit declaration of His Majesty's Government, either to bring forward or to support an application to Parliament, for affording relief, we have no doubt will prove highly satisfactory to the members of our Society; and while we rely upon this support, we do not for a moment doubt of the cordial co-operation of those eminent Statesmen who have given their assistance in the cause of religious liberty upon former occasions.

We have thus thought it necessary to send these particulars for your information, which will afford you and our people matter of consolation, as they furnish strong reason to expect that our religious rights will be so recognized and defined, as not to admit of any future difference of opinion as to their extent.

We cannot conclude without expressing our earnest hope, that your constant prayers will be offered to him from whom all good counsels and just works do proceed,

that in this great concern, which so deeply affects the rights of conscience and religious liberty, we may be assisted by his Holy Spirit, to act consistently with the principles of truth and righteousness.

We are, dear Sir,

Your affectionate Friends and Servants,

(Signed, by order of the committee)

JOHN BARBER, *Chairman.*

JOS. BUTTERWORTH, *Secretary.*

N. B. The Superintendent is requested to read this Letter to the Societies.

(COPY.)

Downing-street, May 9, 1812.

SIR,

Mr. Perceval having received your Letter* of yesterday's date, informing him of the intention of the General Committee of the late Rev. Mr. Wesley's Societies, to submit to his consideration the outlines of a Bill which appears to them to be made necessary by the late decision in the Court of King's Bench, respecting the construction of the Toleration Act, I have his directions to express his readiness to receive any communication which the Society may be desirous of making to him.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

(Signed) A. ROSENHAGEN.

To MR. BUTTERWORTH, *Fleet-street.*

(COPY.)

Frederick's Place, Old Jewry, May 9, 1812.

SIR,

Agreeably to the intimation of Mr. Butterworth's note of yesterday, I have the honour, by direction of

* This letter is wanting; its import however may be understood by the answer.

the Committee of the Societies, founded by the late Rev. Mr. Wesley, to transmit you the sketch of a Bill, which they presume to hope, will not be found more extensive in its operations than his Majesty's Government may deem necessary, but which the Committee consider essential for the peaceable enjoyment of those religious privileges which they have exercised for more than seventy years.

In framing this Bill, the Committee have had in view the Toleration of their Societies, (amongst which are to be found many who frequent and are attached to the worship of the Established Church, as well as others who are Dissenters,) and to protect those Religious Meetings which they have exercised from their foundation without interruption. But from the legal uncertainty in which they are now involved, as to the meaning of the Toleration Act, they have found that any plan for the amendment of that Act would be attended with almost insurmountable difficulties, and to leave the Conventicle Act, (which is so oppressive in its operations and so hostile to Religious Toleration,) unrepealed, would be abandoning their Societies and other religious denominations to a constant state of painful anxiety.

Under all circumstances, therefore, the Committee are convinced that a Bill for repealing the Conventicle, and, in part, the Five Mile Act, and (instead of attempting to amend the Act of Toleration) to regulate the Toleration in future, will not only be the method best calculated to attain the object they have in view, but to afford in return that security for loyal conduct which the Government has a right to expect; and they trust when the Bill is maturely considered, that it enforces every security which those who are the objects of it have power to give, or which Government can think necessary to require.

The scope of the Bill is to remove all doubt as to the legality of his Majesty's Protestant Subjects worshipping God agreeably to the dictates of their consciences, and which has been the practice for the last century. Of this right there seems to be no doubt.—The Bill asks no immunities for any except for regu-

lar Ministers who are altogether devoted to their office, and who indeed have, in practice, been exempted from Civil and Military service. And as it adopts no phraseology which is exclusively applicable to any one sect of religion, it cannot but be a measure acceptable to all. And the Committee cannot but express the sincere satisfaction they enjoy in feeling that while the Bill protects the various Sects of Protestants (whether Dissenting altogether from, or partially conforming to the Established Church,) in the exercise of their religious worship, it will materially strengthen the Government both in Church and State.

The Committee are anxious to obtain the support of his Majesty's Government for a measure which involves the dearest privileges of a great and loyal part of the population, and the success of which must materially depend upon their countenance, and they earnestly hope that you, Sir, will have the goodness to undertake the labour of directing this important measure through the House of Commons, and they beg to add, that from the anxiety excited by the uncertainty of the law upon the subject, the Committee trust you will feel with them the necessity of the earliest application for relief.

Although upon very mature consideration, the Committee consider the leading features of the bill as indispensable, there may be points of minor importance, which may require modification. Indeed should you think the whole or any of its various parts require explanation, a Deputation from the Committee will be happy to have the honour of waiting upon you at any time you may appoint.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient,
And very humble Servant,
(Signed)
THOMAS ALLEN, *Solicitor.*

To the Rt. Hon. Spencer Perceval, &c. &c.

The Sketch of a Bill was sent to the Right Honourable Mr. Perceval with this Letter, but his much lamented death on the 11th instant, closed the correspondence.

AT A MEETING OF

THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

OF THE SOCIETIES

OF THE LATE

REV. JOHN WESLEY,

Convened for the purpose of taking into consideration a Bill, brought into the House of Lords by the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Sidmouth, entitled, "An Act to explain and render more effectual certain Acts of the first year of the reign of King William and Queen Mary, and of the nineteenth Year of the reign of His present Majesty, so far as the same relate to Protestant Dissenting Ministers;" Held at the New Chapel, City Road, London, the 14th of May, 1811:

IT WAS RESOLVED,

I. That the said Bill, if carried into a Law, will be a great infringement of the laws of religious Toleration, and will be subversive of the most valuable rights and privileges which we as a religious society enjoy.

II. *That* the said Act will in future curtail the privileges and exemptions of our regular preachers, who are wholly devoted to the functions of their office, and to which they are legally entitled under the Letter and Spirit of the Act of Toleration.

III. *That* the said Act will render it very difficult, if not impracticable, to obtain Certificates for the great body of local preachers and exhorters, and who are not only an useful part of our society, but whose aid is essentially necessary in the very numerous Chapels and Meeting-Houses in which our congregations assemble.

IV. *That* with great grief of heart we have observed of late, a growing disposition in different parts of the

country, to disturb our Meetings, even those which are held only for prayer to Almighty God, and to inforce the penalties of the Conventicle Act upon those who officiate in them; the great inconvenience and heavy expenses of which we have already felt. If this system of persecution should be persevered in, the subordinate Teachers of our body, to the amount of many thousands of persons in the United Kingdom, will be driven to apply for Certificates to protect them from the Penalties of the Conventicle Act, which indeed they can obtain under the existing Laws without obstruction; but if the present Bill should be passed into a Law, it will be utterly impossible to consider such persons as Dissenting Ministers, and to certify them under the said Act: therefore, either an end will be put to the functions of a most valuable and useful part of our Community, or they will be exposed to all the Penalties of the Conventicle Act; the consequence of which will be, that as the people cannot, and ought not to refrain from acts of social worship, and meetings for religious instruction, the penalties cannot be paid, and the prisons will be peopled with some of the most peaceable and pious characters in the country.

V. *That* a great number of the persons mentioned in the last Resolution, (as well as a large proportion of our Societies) considering themselves as members of the Established Church, to which they are conscientiously attached, will feel it quite incompatible with their sentiments to apply for Certificates under the terms of the said act, which requires them to be certified, and to declare themselves as dissenting ministers.

VI. *That* the officers alluded to in the Fourth Resolution, are an essential part of the Economy of our Societies, which has for its object, the Instruction of the Ignorant, and the Relief of the Miserable, rather than the creation or extension of a distinct Sect of Religion; and without whose aid the various Chapels of our Societies in the United Kingdom, which have cost an immense sum of money in their erection, cannot be supported.

VII. *That* our Chapels have been built, and large

sums of money, due upon the same, for which the respective Trustees are now responsible, have been lent and advanced under the most perfect confidence that our System, so necessary for their support, would remain undisturbed; and that those Rights of Conscience, which our most Gracious Sovereign on his Accession to the throne declared should be maintained inviolable, would, in this happy and enlightened country, ever be held sacred, and preserved unfringed.

VIII. *That* it does not appear to us, that the present toleration Laws are either so ineffectual, or the interpretation of them so uncertain, as to render any Bill necessary to explain them, much less to curtail the benefits intended to be conveyed by them; but on the other hand, we are satisfied, that if the present Bill should pass, the whole Law of Religious Toleration will become more obscure, and its meaning more uncertain, and thus a fruitful source of litigation and oppression will be opened.

IX. *That* the Returns of the Archbishops and Bishops, of the number of Places for Divine Worship, &c. in their respective Dioceses, upon which the present measure appears to be founded, are far from furnishing evidence of the necessity of restricting the operations of religious Societies; but, on the contrary, they contain the most decisive proofs (from the inadequacy of the Parish Churches to contain the Inhabitants of the Kingdom) that the increasing Population calls for all the means of religious Instruction, which well-disposed persons, of all Denominations of Christians, have in their power to afford.

X. *That* from the manifest effect which the diffusion of religion has had for the last fifty years, in raising the standard of public morals, and in promoting loyalty in the middle ranks, as well as subordination and industry in the lower orders of Society, which so powerfully operate upon the national prosperity and public spirit, we dread the adoption of any measure which can in the least weaken these great sinews of the nation, or restrain the patriotic efforts of any of the religious Communities of the Country.

XI. *That* as we deprecate the consequences of the Bill as it now stands, so we cannot see that any modification of it can meet the views of its Right Honourable and Noble Proposer, (whose character we highly respect) without essentially deteriorating the indefeasible rights and privileges of those who are the objects of the Toleration Laws.

XII. *That* inasmuch as this Act will most deeply affect our Societies whose moral character and loyalty are unimpeachable, we feel it our duty to declare, that we do not believe there exists among them any practice or disposition, to warrant a legislative measure, which would abridge our rights and privileges.

XIII. *That* the introduction of the present measure is as unseasonable, as it is needless and oppressive.—At any time religious rights form a most delicate subject for legislative interference, but at such a time as this, when not only unanimity, but affection for the Government and Laws of our Country are more than ever essential, for the patient endurance of the pressure of the times, and the repulsion of the bitterest enemy with which this country ever had to contend, the discussion of these rights is most feelingly to be deprecated. Much irritation,—even worse than political irritation, would be produced, and the ardent affection of many a conscientious and loyal subject would be involuntarily diminished. We are impressed with these sentiments the more deeply, as not a shadow of a charge is brought against our very numerous body, and we can challenge the most rigid inquiry into the moral and political character of our preachers and our people.

XIV. *That*, abstaining from all observations on the abstract rights of conscience, but with the views and feelings thus expressed, we are most decidedly of opinion that the present measure is radically objectionable, and does not admit of any modification; and we cannot but feel it our duty to oppose the bill in all its stages by every constitutional means.

XV. *That* we reflect with high satisfaction on the liberal, enlightened, and religious declaration of our most Gracious Sovereign, on the commencement of his

reign. "Born," said his Majesty, in his first speech from the throne, "and educated in this country, I glo- "ry in the name of Briton, and the peculiar happiness "of my life will ever consist in promoting the welfare "of a people, whose loyalty and warm affection to me "I consider as the greatest and most permanent secu- "rity of my throne; and I doubt not, but their steadi- "ness in those principles will equal the firmness of my "invariable resolution to adhere to, and strengthen "this excellent constitution in church and state; *and* "*to maintain the toleration inviolable.* The civil and "*religious rights of my loving subjects are equally dear* "*to me with the most valuable prerogatives of my crown;* "and as the surest foundation of the whole, and the "best means to draw down the Divine favour on my "reign, *it is my fixed purpose, to countenance and encour-* "*age the practice of true religion and virtue.*" This declaration of our beloved Sovereign has been religiously fulfilled during a long and benificent reign, and has been humbly met by our societies with the affection it was calculated to inspire. We have built with confidence upon this gracious declaration, and our confidence has not been misplaced. His Majesty has been a shield to the religious of all persuasions, and he has respected the rights of conscience in all. And we cannot doubt that His Royal Highness the Prince Regent, with those just sentiments of truth and sincerity, which he has graciously declared shall be the guide of his character and every action of his life, will feel it his happiness to recognize the high natural rights of conscience; and should it please the wise disposer of all events to restore his afflicted Father to the personal exercise of his Royal functions, His Royal Highness will feel it amongst the many blessings of his benevolent and liberal Administration that he has, agreeably to the ardent wishes of a great portion of His Majesty's loyal subjects, preserved those sacred Rights entire, and returned to his beloved Father the *Toleration inviolate.* We have too much confidence in the wisdom and justice of Parliament, to imagine that a measure will be adopted, so obnoxious to such a large propor-

tion of the nation, as our societies and congregations constitute; but if unhappily we should be disappointed, and the dernier resort, we should be driven to submit our case to his Royal Highness, we have already the gratification of his royal assurance, that he will "be "ready to listen to the complaints of those who may "think themselves aggrieved, and regulate his con- "duct upon the established principles of that ancient "and excellent constitution, under which the people of "this country have hitherto enjoyed a state of unrival- "led prosperity and happiness."

XVI. *That* a Sub-Committee be appointed to carry these resolutions into effect.

XVII. *That* these Resolutions be printed, and with Circular letters on the subject, be immediately transmitted to our societies throughout the United Kingdom, if the Sub-Committee judge it to be necessary.

XVIII. *That* before any active measures be taken, a Deputation do wait upon the Right Honourable Lord Viscount Sidmouth with a copy of these Resolutions, and earnestly entreat his Lordship to withdraw his Bill.

Signed,

By order of the Committee,

JOSEPH BUTTERWORTH,

Secretary.

Fleet-street, 25th May, 1812.

SIR,

The time appears to be now arrived, when all who are interested in Religious Toleration, should consider what line of conduct ought to be adopted, in order to keep it inviolate. It is obvious that from the obscurity and uncertainty of the law relative to that subject on the one hand, and the disposition which has been recently manifested on the other, to revive the obsolete penal Laws of Religious Intolerance, that some legislative measure is necessary; and the question is to what that measure ought to extend? By the enclosed paper,

which is submitted to your consideration, you will perceive that in proportion as the Act of Toleration is obscure, or inefficient, will be the operation of the Five Mile and Conventicle Acts; and therefore as these Acts are so hostile to the Religious Privileges enjoyed in this Country for more than a Century, it is of the highest importance that by the proposed measure, religious persons should with certainty be relieved from their effects and be enabled to worship God, and propagate Divine Truth, without fear of Penalties. It is apprehended that this can only be done either by amending the Act of Toleration, or repealing the Acts to which I have alluded. As to the first mode, there are serious objections against it. Perhaps it may be sufficient to say, that in considering the meaning of any Act passed for amending the Act of Toleration, it would be necessary to consider the meaning of the Act of Toleration itself: now if the meaning of the Act of Toleration, which for near a Century was considered plain, and perfectly intelligible, be at present uncertain, the probability is, that any new Statute to explain that Act, would scarcely be free from doubt and uncertainty. It may be therefore concluded, that the first will not be the most eligible mode of proceeding, but that the second will be the most clear and unequivocal; and therefore a Bill was submitted to the late Mr. Perceval for repealing the Conventicle and in part the Five Mile Acts under proper regulations. Indeed any thing short of this, would not produce security for the exercise of our Religious Rights, and it would have all the inconvenience of a new and imperfect measure. For it would be much better to live under all the inconveniencies of an old Law considered obsolete, although oppressive, which could never be enforced without odium, than accept an imperfect new Law, which of course would be put into execution with all the sanction of a new Statute, considered necessary and applicable to the present times.

Under these impressions, deeply weighed by our denomination, and submitted to your most grave consideration, we object to *any Bill for the amendment of*

the Act of Toleration: which Act, by recent proceedings, appears to be so inadequate for the protection of our Religious Privileges; nor can we be satisfied with any measure which has not the *clear* and *undoubted effect* of legalizing those Religious Rights and Privileges which have been enjoyed by the various denominations of Christians of this Country for the last Century, both with regard to persons who teach, as well as those who hear; and this we are perfectly satisfied cannot be effected without the repeal of the Conventicle, and in part the Five Mile Act.

We trust that on mature consideration, you will be of the same opinion, and will think it necessary to seek the remedy for the evils we complain of, to the extent above mentioned; not only as needful for the welfare of the Religious Body to which you belong, but as intimately affecting various other Christian Denominations, and in general the diffusion of Christianity in this Country.

I would only add, that if any measure should be adopted that should subject all persons, under pains and penalties, to take out a legal qualification before they should be allowed to exercise their preaching or teaching talents, it would not only interfere with, and indeed destroy much of the spiritual comfort now enjoyed by Religious Society; but what is perhaps infinitely worse in its consequences, be a grand means of preventing the improvement of the gifts and grace of Young Men, preparatory to any sort of designation to the sacred office of the Ministry; and it is the indispensable duty of the present generation to provide for posterity, and to consider how the very numerous Congregations will hereafter be supplied with a succession of Ministers. It is well known that many of the brightest characters which have adorned the Ministry, among the different denominations of Christians, have been nurtured in a more limited sphere before they have been called out, or have been qualified, to fill the sacred offices of public Pastors or Teachers, for which they have afterwards been selected from the various occupations of civil life. They would have entirely shrunk from public duty, and have been lost to the

Church of God, as public characters, through timidity and a variety of other circumstances, if, before any sort of exercise or trial of their gifts, they had been compelled to take out a legal qualification.

While the Penal Acts remained obsolete, they were constantly violated by all denominations with impunity; but as a spirit is now manifested to revive and call them into action, it becomes the obvious duty of all denominations of Christians, to unite their efforts, in order that Statutes so generally disapproved, may be repealed.

I am,
With much respect,
Sir,
Your faithful obedient Servant,
JOS. BUTTERWORTH.

P. S. The importance of guarding the means of obtaining a succession of Ministers, will be felt on considering the number of Congregations in the larger Parishes of England and Wales, given in the following official returns.

RETURNS of the Archbishops and Bishops of the Number of Churches and Chapels of the Church of England, in every Parish of 1000 persons and upwards; also of the number of other Places of Worship not of the Establishment.

Ordered to be printed by the House of Lords, April 5, 1811.

DIOCESE.	*Churches & Chapels of the Establishment.*	*Chapels and Meeting-houses* not *of the Establishment, besides many private houses used for Religious Worship not enumerated.*
1. *Bath and Wells*	78	103
2. *Bangor* - - -	52	99
3. *Bristol* - - -	59	71
4. *Canterbury* - -	84	113
5. *Carlisle* - - -	49	39
6. *Chester* - - -	352	439
7. *Chichester* - -	47	58
8. *Durham* - - -	116	175
9. *Ely* - - - - -	22	32
10. *Exeter* - - - -	180	245
11. *Gloucester* - -	46	76
12. *Hereford* - - -	51	42
13. *Llandaff* - - -	21	45
14. *Lincoln* - - -	165	269
15. *Litchfield & Coventry*	190	288
16. *London* - - -	187	265
17. *Norwich* - - -	78	114
18. *Oxford* - - -	50	39
19. *Peterborough* -	20	36
20. *Rochester* - -	36	44
21. *Salisbury* - - -	135	142
22. *St. Asaph* - -	49	95
23. *Winchester* - -	193	164
24. *Worcester* - -	66	60
25. *York* - - - - -	221	404
	Total 2547 *Churches & Chapels of the church of England.*	*Total* 3457 *Chapels & meeting-houses* not *of the Church of England besides many private houses used for religious worship not enumerated*

N. B The smaller parishes not amounting to 1000 inhabitants, were not returned.

London, July 31, 1812.

To the Superintendent of the

Circuit.

Dear Sir,

In May last the General Committee of Privileges addressed a circular Letter to the Superintendents of Circuits, with a view to allay the apprehensions of the people, under the circumstances in which they were then placed from the new construction of the Toleration Act; and to assure them, that no time would be lost in taking such measures as were likely to promote the success of an application to the Legislature for relief; and they, at the same time, enclosed the copy of a Letter from the late Mr. Perceval (published with his permission) in which he promised to bring forward or to support such an application to Parliament:—but the melancholy death of that lamented statesman put an end for sometime to the correspondence with Government upon the subject.

The Committee, being of opinion that a measure of this nature and magnitude, ought to *originate* with his Majesty's government, (whoever might be in office for the time being) solicited no individual member of the legislature on the subject, but waited till an administration was appointed; when this was done, the Committee lost no time in addressing the Right Honourable the *Earl of Liverpool:* and after the necessary communications, a Bill was introduced into Parliament under his Lordship's auspices, which, to our inexpressible satisfaction has now passed into a law.

In order to understand the bearings and effect of this important and salutary Act of Parliament, and before we make any general remarks, it may be necessary to advert to the situation in which our Societies were placed, and to some of the proceedings of the Committee for the purpose of accomplishing the object they had in view.

By the Conventicle Act (22 Charles II. c. 1.) it was enacted, that if any person of sixteen years of age and upwards, should be *present* at any conventicle or meeting for religion, other than according to the Liturgy and practice of the Church of England, at which should

be present above five persons besides those of the same household, he *should pay a fine of five shillings* for the first offence, and *ten shillings for every subsequent offence*; which penalties might in case of the *poverty* of an offender, be levied on the goods and chattels of *any person present*. *Every person* who should *teach* or *preach* at such conventicle or meeting, should forfeit *twenty pounds* for the first *offence;* and *forty pounds for every subsequent offence*. Every person who should suffer any such conventicle or meeting in his house or premises, should *forfeit twenty pounds*, which, in case of his poverty, might be levied upon the goods of *any person present*. The *justices* and the *military* were empowered to enter conventicles, and disperse religious meetings. And the Act declares the principle (most severe and intolerant) upon which it is to be interpreted, namely:—"*That it* "*shall be construed most largely and beneficially for the* "*suppressing of conventicles and for the justification and* "*encouragement of all persons to be employed in the execu-*"*tion thereof;*" and that no *record*, *warrant*, or *mittimus* to be made by virtue of that Act, or any proceedings thereupon should be *reversed*, *avoided*, or *any way impeached*, by reason of any *default* in *form*? It was also declared, that the goods and chattels of the *husband* should be liable for the penalties incurred by the *wife* for *attending a meeting for religious worship*.

As to the Five Mile Act (17 Charles II. c. 2.) it is thereby declared, that persons therein mentioned who should *preach in any conventicle*, *should not come within five miles of any corporate town sending burgesses to Parliament*, unless in passing upon the road, before such person shall have taken the oath therein mentioned at the Quarter Sessions, under a penalty of *forty pounds*.

Besides these two Acts of Parliament, there were several other Acts which rendered nonconformity, or a deviation from the established religion of the country, unlawful, and highly penal.

Thus stood the law relative to religious assemblies on the accession of *King* William and *Queen* Mary, when or soon afterwards, an Act of Parliament was passed for the relief of conscientious persons, suffering under or exposed to those intolerant and oppresive laws. By

that Act (1 William and Mary, c. 18) usually called the TOLERATION ACT, it was in substance declared, that with regard to *private individuals*, the former Acts should not extend to *any person dissenting from* the Church of England, who should at the Sessions take the Oaths, and subscribe the Declaration therein mentioned; and with regard to the *ministers of religion*, it was enacted that no *person dissenting* from the Church of England, in Holy Orders, or pretended Holy Orders, or pretending to Holy Orders, nor any preacher or teacher of any congregation of *dissenting* Protestants, who should at the Sessions make the *Declaration* and take the Oaths therein expressed, should be liable to the penalties of the Acts of Parliament therein mentioned. Provided that such person should not at any time preach in any place *with the doors locked, barred, or bolted.* By this Act also, a justice was empowered at any time to require any person that went to any meeting for the exercise of religious worship, to subscribe the *Declaration* and take the *Oaths* therein mentioned; and in case of refusal, to commit such person to prison. And the ministers of religion having taken the Oaths under the Act, were exempt from certain offices. It was declared, that no assembly for religious worship should be allowed till *registered.* And disturbers of religious worship coming *into* a registered place, were subjected to the penalty of twenty pounds. There are other provisions in the Act, which it may be unnecessary to mention; nor need we particularize the STATUTE of the 10 of *Queen* ANNE, c. 2. which extends the liberty of a person having taken the Oaths in one county, to preach in another county; nor the STATUTE of the 19th of GEORGE III. which regulates the *Oaths* and *Declaration* to be made, and extends the exemptions.

You will perceive, that it was only by the operation of these last Acts, that any *Protestant* not resorting to the established church, could be protected from the antecedent penal Statutes; and in proportion as the construction of these Tolerating Acts was limited, would be the destructive operation of those penal statutes.—However, these Acts were considered by the various classes of Dissenters as the Palladium of their religious

liberty; and their efficacy for the protection of the various classes of *Dissenters* was never questioned till very lately: and all who believed it their duty to preach the religious doctrines which they held, and were inclined to protect themselves from the penalties of former Acts, found little difficulty in getting the magistrates at the Sessions to administer the Oaths, &c. as it was the generally received doctrine, that the magistrate acted merely *ministerially*—that they had no authority to inquire into the *fitness* or *character* of the applicant —and could not refuse the oaths, &c. to any man who represented himself in *Holy Orders*, or *pretended Holy Orders*, or as *pretending to Holy Orders;* or as being a *teacher* or *preacher* of a congregation dissenting from the church of England; and it was thought that there could scarcely be any dissenting teacher of religion who could not properly consider himself as falling within one of the above descriptions. But latterly there has been a manifest alteration in the conduct of many magistrates, who, by narrowing the construction of the Toleration Act, have, on many alleged reasons, refused the oaths, &c. to several applicants. The *new construction* of the magistrates, has in some points of very great importance to the religious nonconformists, or occasional conformists, been sanctioned by the Court of King's Bench, which held, that a man to entitle himself to take the oaths, &c. as required by the Act of Toleration, ought to show himself to be the acknowledged teacher or preacher of some *particular congregation*, and that it was not enough for a man to state himself a Protestant Dissenter, who preaches to several congregations of Protestant Dissenters. And with regard to persons pretending to Holy Orders, the decision of the Court left us in great uncertainty.

In this state of perplexity, with regard to what was to be the construction of the Toleration Act, or rather of probability that it would afford but a very insufficient protection for the Methodists, even *if they could denominate themselves Dissenters*, the Committee were under the necessity of deeply considering the situation of the whole body. But when they were constantly receiving intelligence from various parts of the country, of

the appearance of a new spirit of hostility to the preachers, and of persecution against the harmless members of their Societies by enforcing the penalties of the most odious of obsolete laws upon the persons of the poor and defenceless, the Committee were exceedingly alarmed. For although they admired, and have experienced the benefit of the pure and impartial administration of justice, for which this country is so celebrated, yet they could not but consider the state of the Societies with apprehension, when they saw the press teeming with the grossest slander and falsehood against them; their religious practices traduced and vilified; and they themselves represented as "*vermin fit only to be destroyed.*" Had such representations been casual, they would have been disregarded; but when they were reiterated in certain popular *Publications month* after *month*, and one *quarter* of a year after another—when the legislature were loudly and repeatedly called upon to adopt measures of coercion against them, under the pretence that evangelical religion was inimical to public security and morals, and, as they saw, that in unison with this spirit, there seemed a growing disposition in many to enforce the penalties of the *Conventicle Act* upon those who either *had not* taken the oaths, or *could not* take them, or *were not permitted* to take them, &c. under the Toleration Act, the Committee were under the greatest apprehension that the Societies were about to be deprived of that liberty to worship God which, either under the law, or by the courtesy of the country, they had enjoyed from their first rise nearly a century ago. And their fears were far from being allayed by the intelligence which thickened upon them, and they became furnished with a mass of incontrovertible evidence from different parts of the country, which showed that even if the members of our Societies were to be considered as *Dissenters*, (which they have always disclaimed, it would be utterly impossible to get protection under the Toleration Acts for our Preachers and Teachers, especially for the Local Preachers, Class Leaders, &c. &c.

These various Teachers were absolutely necessary for our economy, and without them we knew that our

Societies and religious customs could not be carried on. They had, it is true, been *tolerated* by the general *consent* of the country rather than *protected* by the *law;* but this had with almost equal efficacy secured the free exercise of ther religious privileges.

However, as a bitter spirit of intolerance was thus manifesting itself, the Committee thought it in vain to contend for protection under acts of Parliament which were of uncertain interpretations as to Dissenters, but of no value to those who *considered themselves as belonging to the church of England*, of which the great bulk of our Societies is composed, the Committee therefore determined to submit their case to the Government, and to Parliament; and to solicit the adoption of such a measure as would secure to the *Methodist Societies*, and to *other denominations of Christians suffering with them*, the free exercise of their religious rights and privileges.

It now became necessary for the Committee deeply and critically to consider the situation and principles of the Societies, in order to adapt a measure for their relief, which they might submit to his Majesty's ministers for their support in Parliament. In doing this, the Committee could not forget that the Societies are mere associations of Christians, united for general improvement and edification; and as the great majority of them were, from religious principle, attached to the Church of England, they could not conscientiously take the oath as *Dissenters*, to whom alone, the *Act of Toleration* applied. Therefore no amendment of that Act appeared likely to answer the purpose. But as *Dissenters* of various denominations were also to be contemplated by the projected measure, it became necessary to proceed upon some principle common to all. A principle which should recognize *the rights of conscience*, and at the same time afford that security for peaceable and loyal conduct, which the government of any state has a right to expect. It appeared also material to avoid all phraseology which would be exclusively applicable to any *one sect* of religious people.

As to the principle, the Committee, at an early stage of their deliberations, came to the resolution, that although all well-regulated societies, and denominations

of Christians will exercise their own rules for the admission of public or private teachers among themselves, yet *it is the unalienable right of every man to worship God agreeably to the dictates of his own conscience;* and that he has a right to HEAR and to TEACH those Christian truths which he conscientiously believes, without any *restraint* or *judicial* interference from the *civil magistrate*, provided he do not thereby disturb the peace of the community, and that on no account whatever would the Committee concede this fundamental principle.

You will see at once, that it is only on this legitimate principle, that the various members of our Societies, and indeed mankind in general, *have any right to teach and instruct one another.* It was on this leading principle, that we drew up and submitted a Bill to the late Mr. Perceval, qualified however with those provisions which made our religious worship known, and laid it open for the inspection of all; and left our teachers subject to be called upon to take the usual obligations of allegiance, &c. which no good man could object to; and which by the Constitution, no subject can lawfully refuse; but at the same time provision was made, that those Oaths were not to be taken as an *antecedent* qualification, but when required, they were to be taken with the least possible inconvenience, by going before one neighbouring magistrate, instead of the Quarter Sessions. A Bill founded on such principles, and with such views, the Committee trusted would at once secure the *rights of conscience*, and give every needful *pledge* to the *State*, for the fulfilment of our duties as good subjects. And although they did not attempt to amend the Act of Toleration, which had now become so uncertain in its construction, but only suggested a new Act, adapted to the present state of religious Society, yet they did not wish to remove the Old Toleration Act, or lessen any of the benefits to be derived from it by any Class of Christians.

On these principles, and with a view to establish them in practice, the correspondence with the *Earl of Liverpool* was conducted, and we have the great satisfaction to say, that from a just sense of the high impor-

tance of those principles, which have been so powerful in the establishment and support of the *Protestant Church*, and the preservation of civil order in this country; and which are so congenial with every dictate of sound policy and pure religion, his Lordship and his Majesty's Ministers prepared a bill, which having now passed into a law, will be found to carry into effect what the Committee deemed so essential, in any measure designed to meet the situation of the *Methodist Societies*, and *other denominations of Christians*. To a short sketch of this Act, we have now to request your attention; but for full information we must refer you to the Act itself.

The new Act *absolutely repeals* the *Five Mile* and the *Conventicle Acts*, and another Act of a most offensive kind, which affected a highly respectable body, the *Quakers*. It then proceeds to relieve from the Penalties of the several Acts mentioned in the Toleration Act, or any amendment of the same, all Protestants who resort to a congregation allowed by the Acts there referred to: and you will not fail to observe, that while it meets the situation of the Dissenters, how liberally it treats the condition of our Societies. It is not now necessary that a person should be obliged to relinquish his attachment to the established Church, in order to bring himself under the protection afforded by this Act: and on the other hand, if he be a Dissenter, he is protected by this Bill. The simple condition of protection is, that a Protestant do resort to *some place of worship*, which if not the only way, is at least the usual and overt manner of showing our belief in the existence of the Deity, and in a future state of retribution; without which, there is no security for the peace and happiness of society. To our Societies this feature of the Act is of great importance, because it allows our members to continue their attachment to the established Church, without relinquishing the privileges which the christian communion of our Societies so largely affords: As under the Toleration Act, so under this act, all places of worship must be *certified* to the proper Court: but under this Act a Preacher need not wait till the place be registered before he preaches. By the

former Acts only *five Persons* could meet together, besides a man's own family, without having the place registered; by this Act the number is extended to *twenty persons* who may meet without certifying the place of meeting. By the *former Act*, no person could preach till he had taken the Oaths; by this Act, any person may preach without having taken the Oaths; and is merely liable to be called on *once* to take them afterwards, *if required in writing by one Justice.* By the *Toleration Acts*, persons were obliged to go to the Quarter Sessions to take the Oaths; by *this* Act any person may take them before one Justice only; and in no case, is such person compellable to *travel above five miles for that purpose:* so that it will be perfectly unnecessry for any of our Preachers or Teachers to take the Oaths until they are required by a Justice, unless our travelling Preachers, who carry on no business, and intend to claim exemption from civil and military duties. By the *new construction* of the Toleration Act, it appeared that only *particular persons* could insist upon taking the Oaths, &c. by *this* Act *any Protestant*, whether preacher or otherwise, whether a Dissenter or a member of the Church of England, may *require* a Justice to administer the Oaths, &c. and grant a Certificate.

As to the exemption from civil and military duties, they are about the same as to Preachers carrying on no business, except that the Toleration Act extended only to Dissenters, and this Act includes all Preachers as they were by the Toleration and new Militia Bills, whether Dissenters or not. By the Toleration Act, so by *this*, the doors of all places of worship are to be unlocked. In this Act you will observe a great and most beneficial alteration for the protection of religious assemblies. The Toleration Act did not provide for the punishment of riotous persons who did not come *into* the house, by which means many of our congregations were greatly disturbed by noises made on *the outside;* but by this Act, any person who shall wilfully and maliciously disturb a Congregation, (whether by coming *into* or being on the outside of the house) shall incur a penalty of 40*l.* which penalty is double the amount of that imposed for the same offence by the Toleration Act. There is also an-

other important advantage in this Act, which is, that the writ of *Certiorari* is not taken away, by which means, proceedings may be removed into the Court of King's Bench.

Thus have we endeavoured to give you an outline of this important Act of the Legislature: an Act which, we trust, you and our friends will consider as clearly recognizing in practice, those great principles which are the bassis of *religious freedom*, and that its operation will not only enable our Societies to exercise, under the protection of the law, those privliges which they have ever considered the most sacred and invaluable, and which under the Divine blessing, have contributed to the consolation of thousands: but it will serve for the extension of piety and virtue amongst all denominations, by promoting christian fellowship, the dissemination of Divine truth, and the interchange of religious instruction. And whilst it amply extends the circle of religious liberty to those who dissent from, or who partially or occasionly conform to the established church, as well as to strict members of her communion, who wish to enjoy religious meetings, it will excite attachment to, and increase the security of that church, which has produced so many champions for the verities of our holy religion, and in which indeed, our Societies have been founded.

Nor should it be forgotton, (especially in times like the present) that this Act is of peculiar excellency, from the effect it will have upon the happiness of the *religious poor*. They value exceedingly the liberty of *associating* for mutual religious instruction and consolation. It is the exercise of that privilege which soothes them under poverty and distress, and by the grace of God, makes them content under the apparently adverse dispensations of divine providence; and teaches them to wait with patience for the "*inheritance which is incorruptible.*" This Act by removing all restraint from the performance of the great duty of "*exhorting one another*," may be considered as having the well-disposed and pious poor for its object, and great will be their gratitude and gladness, that they can, under the protection of this Law, worship God in their own way, and instruct each other, as well as hear those Ministers whose labours they es-

teem. And while it has this effect upon their individual happiness, it will make them value the *Constitution of the Country*, through which they derive such benefits. In short, the Committee cannot but contemplate this important extension of Religious Freedom, with the highest satisfaction and delight; and they cannot doubt, that in proportion to the apparent excellency of this Act of Parliament, will be the magnitude of the benefits which the nation at large will derive from it.

In the accomplishment of this salutary measure, the Committee have necessarily had much correspondence with the Prime Minister, *the right honourable the Earl of Liverpool;* and it is a duty they owe to his Majesty's Government, and to that noble Lord in particular, to express with pleasure and gratitude the high sense of the obligations they feel themselves under, for the patient attention which his Lordship has given to the many and necessary representations of the Committee, as well as the readiness manifested to meet fully the situation of our societies, and of other religious denominations; and for the cordiality with which his Lordship matured and supported the Bill in Parliament, which appears to be commensurate to the present necessities and wishes of our Societies.

The Committee are also under considerable obligations to *His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury*, for his polite attention to the subject, and for the liberal sentiments expressed by his Grace, on various occasions: And we cannot but feel great gratitude to all the right reverend Prelates who concurred in the bill, without whose concurrence it must have met with considerable difficulties in its progress through Parliament.

It is also the duty of the Committee, to express their humble thanks to the rest of the Cabinet Ministers, for the support which this measure has received from them, and particularly *to the right honourable the Lord High Chancellor*, for his Lordship's candid and liberal attention to the Bill in the House of Lords; and also to *the right honourable Viscount Castlereagh*, for the labour of conducting it in the House of Commons. In these sentiments of respect and gratitude, we are sure we shall be joined by you, and our societies universally.

The Committee are happy to inform you, to whom they are under particular obligations, on this important occasion, that you may have the pleasure of participating with them, in those sentiments which the sense of benefits received naturally inspire. They will therefore mention, that they are greatly indebted to the *Right Honourable Earl Stanhope*, to the *Right Honourable Lord Holland*, and to the *Right Honourable Lord Erskine*, for their attention and support in the House of Peers; and to *William Wilberforce, Esq. James Stephen, Esq. Samuel Whitehead, Esq.* and *Thomas Babington, Esq.* Members of the House of Commons, from each of whom the Committee have derived important services relative to this valuable Act.

While endeavouring to express our gratitude upon this occasion, rather than pretending to discharge the debt which we owe to the distinguished characters we have mentioned, it is with great satisfaction we acknowledge the co-operation which we have experienced from "*the Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty*," who represent the great body of Dissenters in this country, and from our affectionate friends the *Quakers*, with whom, as well as with other denominations of Christians, we are happy to be associated in receiving benefit in the same friendly Act of the Legislature: we are sure this co-operation will increase your esteem for those respectable members of civil and religious society.

In considering the many circumstances relative to the progress and completion of this excellent measure, we cannot but adore the providence and goodness of God, without whose direction and aid the work could not have been accomplished. And we would ascribe the glory, the honour, and power to Him, from whom alone all good councils and all just works do proceed. Our joy is great upon this interesting occasion; but how greatly would our pleasure have been enhanced, had this event witnessed the return of health to our gracious Sovereign, whose name must ever be associated with Religious Toleration: for his Majesty, in his first speech from the throne, declared it his invariable resolution *to maintain the Toleration inviolate*. A declaration which

has been religiously fulfilled during a long and beneficent reign. And should it please Divine Providence to restore his Majesty in health to his affectionate people, it would, we doubt not, afford him the highest gratification, that a measure so full of regard to the sacred rights of conscience, and so amply extending the bounds of Toleration, had been carried into effect under the liberal administration of his Royal Highness the Prince Regent. May it please God to smooth the bed of the *Sovereign* in his affliction, and endue the *Prince* plenteously with heavenly gifts, and prosper him with all happiness.

To conclude; while on this memorable occasion, we express unfeigned gratitude to those who have rendered us assistance, let us not forget to give the *sole glory* to that God, "by whom Kings reign, and Princes decree justice," let us continue to cultivate the most affectionate regard for our *King* and our *Country*: let us pray for more grace, that we may use our *extended* religious privileges to the greatest advantage, not only *by provoking one another to love and to good works*, but by labouring incessantly to diffuse those sacred truths of our most holy Religion, which we have long proved to be the *power of God unto Salvation, to them who believe;* and thus promote *Glory to God in the Highest*, and on *earth peace*, and *good will among men*,—the *great end* for which our Societies have been established.

We are,

Dear Sir,

Your affectionate Friends and Servants.

(Signed)

By Order and on behalf of the Committee.

ADAM CLARKE, *Chairman.*

JOSEPH BUTTERWORTH, *Secretary.*

An Act to repeal certain Acts, and amend other Acts, relating to Religious Worship and Assemblies, and Persons teaching or preaching therein. [29th July, 1812.]

52 Geo. III. c. 155.

Whereas it is expedient that certain Acts of Parliament made in the reign of his late Majesty King Charles the Second, relating to Nonconformists and Conventicles, and refusing to take Oaths, should be repealed; and that the laws relating to certain Congregations and Assemblies for religious Worship, and persons teaching, preaching, or officiating therein, and resorting thereto should be amended; Be it therefore enacted, by the King's Most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That from and after the passing of this Act, an Act of Parliament made in the Session of Parliament held in the thirteenth and fourteenth years of his late Majesty King Charles the Second, entitled, "An Act for preventing the mischiefs and dangers, that may arise by certain persons called Quakers, and others, refusing to take lawful Oaths," and another Act of Parliament made in the seventeenth year of the reign of his late Majesty King Charles the second, entitled, "An Act for restraining Nonconformists from inhabiting in "Corporations;" and another Act of Parliament made in the twenty-second year of the reign of the late King Charles the second, entitled, "An Act to prevent and suppress Seditious Conventicles," shall be and the same are hereby repealed.

II. And be it further enacted, That from and after the passing of this Act, no Congregation or Assembly for Religious Worship of Protestants (at which there shall be present more than twenty persons besides the immediate family and servants of the person in whose house or upon whose premises such Meeting, Congregation, or Assembly shall be had) shall be permitted or allowed, unless and until the place of such Meeting, if the same shall not have been duly certified and registered under any former Act or Acts of Parliament relating to registering places of Religious Worship, shall have been or

shall be certified to the Bishop of the Diocese, or to the Archdeacon of the Archdeaconry, or to the Justices of the Peace at the General or Quarter Sessions of the Peace for the county, riding, division, city, town, or place, in which such Meeting shall be held; and all places of Meeting which shall be so certified to the Bishop's or Archdeacon's Court shall be returned by such court once in each year to the Quarter Sessions of the county, riding, division, city, town or place; and all places of Meeting which shall be so certified to the Quarter Sessions of the Peace shall be also returned once in each year to the Bishop or Archdeacon; and all such places shall be registered in the said Bishop's or Archdeacon's Court respectively, and recorded at the said General or Quarter Sessions; the Register or Clerk of the Peace whereof respectively is hereby required to register and record the same; and the Bishop, or Register, or Clerk, of the Peace, to whom any such place of Meeting shall be certified under this Act, shall give a Certificate thereof to such person or persons as shall request or demand the same, for which there shall be no greater fee nor reward taken than two shillings and sixpence; and every person who shall knowingly permit or suffer any such congregation or assembly as aforesaid, to meet in any place occupied by him, until the same shall have been so certified as aforesaid, shall forfeit for every time any such congregation or assembly shall meet contrary to the provisions of this Act, a sum not exceeding twenty pounds, nor less than twenty shillings, at the discretion of the Justices who shall convict for such offence.

III. Provided always, and be it further enacted, That every person who shall teach or preach in any congregation or assembly as aforesaid, in any place without the consent of the occupier thereof, shall forfeit for every such offence any sum not exceeding thirty pounds, nor less than forty shillings, at the discretion of the Justices who shall convict for such offence.

IV. And be it further enacted, That from and after the passing of this Act, every person who shall teach or preach at, or officiate in, or shall resort to any congregation or congregations, assembly or assemblies for religious worship of Protestants, whose place of meeting

shall be duly certified according to the provisions of this Act, or any other Act or Acts of Parliament relating to the certifying and registering of places of religious worship, shall be exempt from all such pains and penalties under any other Act or Acts of Parliament relating to religious worship, as any person who shall have taken the oaths and made the declaration prescribed by or mentioned in an Act, made in the first year of the reign of King William and Queen Mary, entitled, "An "Act for exemtping their Majesties' Protestant subjects "dissenting from the Church of England, from the pen- "alties of certain Laws," or any Act amending the said Act, is by law exempt, as fully and effectually as if all such pains and penalties, and the several Acts enforcing the same, were recited in this Act, and such exemptions as aforesaid were severally and separately enacted in relation thereto.

V. Provided always, and be it further enacted, That every person not having taken the oaths, and subscribed the declaration herein after specified, who shall preach or teach at any place of religious worship certified in pursuance of the directions of this Act, shall, when thereto required by any one Justice of the Peace, by any writing under his hand, or signed by him, take, and make, and subscribe, in the presence of such Justice of the Peace, the oaths and declaration specified and contained in an Act, passed in the nineteenth year of the reign of His Majesty King George the Third, entitled, "An Act for the further relief of Protestent dissenting ministers and schoolmasters;" and no such person who, upon being so required to take such oaths and make such declaration as aforesaid, shall refuse to attend the Justice requiring the same, or to take, and make, and subscribe such oaths and declaration as aforesaid, shall be thereafter permitted or allowed to teach or preach in any such congregation or assembly for religious worship, until he shall have taken such oaths, and made such declaration as aforesaid, on pain of forfeiting for every time he shall so teach or preach, any sum not exceeding ten pounds, nor less than ten shillings, at the discretion of the Justice convicting for such offence.

VI. Provided always, and be it further enacted,

That no person shall be required by any Justice of the Peace to go to any greater distance than five miles from his own home, or from the place where he shall be residing at the time of such requisition, for the purpose of taking such Oaths as aforesaid.

VII. And be it further enacted, That it shall be lawful for any of his Majesty's Protestant subjects to appear before any one Justice of the Peace, and to produce to such Justice of the Peace a printed or written copy of the said Oaths and Declaration, and to require such Justice to administer such Oaths, and to tender such Declaration to be made, taken and subscribed by such Person; and thereupon it shall be lawful for such Justice, and he is hereby authorized and required to administer such Oaths, and to tender such Declaration to the person requiring to take, and make, and subscribe the same; and such person shall take and make and subscribe such oaths and declaration in the presence of such Justice accordingly; and such Justice shall attest the same to be sworn before him, and shall transmit or deliver the same to the Clerk of the Peace for the county, riding, division, city, town, or place, for which he shall act as such Justice of the peace, before or at the next General or Quarter Sessions of the Peace for such county, riding, division, city, town, or place.

VIII. And be it further enacted, That every Justice of the Peace, before whom any person shall make, and take, and subscribe such Oaths and Declaration as aforesaid, shall forthwith give to the Person having taken, made, and subscribed such Oaths and Declaration, a Certificate thereof under the hand of such Justice, in the form following: (that is to say)

"I *A. B.* one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace "for the county (riding, division, city, *or* town, *or* "place, *as the case may be*) of Do hereby "certify, That *C. D.* of, &c. [*describing the Christian "and Surname, and place of abode of the party*] did "this day appear before me, and did make, and take, "and subscribe the several Oaths and Declaration "specified in an Act, made in the fifty-second year "of the reign of King George the Third, entitled. "[*Set forth the title of this Act.*] Witness my hand "this day of one thousand eight hundred

" and And for the making and beginning of which Certificate, where the said Oaths and Declaration are taken and made on the requisition of the party taking and making the same, such Justice shall be entitled to demand and have a fee of two shillings and sixpence, and no more: And such certificate shall be conclusive evidence that the party named therein has made and taken the Oaths, and subscribed the Declaration in manner required by this Act.

IX. And be it further enacted, That every person who shall teach or preach in any such congregation or assembly, or congregations or assemblies as aforesaid, who shall employ himself solely in the duties of a teacher or preacher, and not follow or engage in any trade or business, or other profession, occupation or employment, for his livelihood, except that of a schoolmaster, and who shall produce a Certificate of some Justice of the Peace, and of his having taken, and made, and subscribed the Oaths and Declaration aforesaid, shall be exempt from the civil services and offices specified in the said recited Act passed in the first year of King William and Queen Mary, and from being balloted to serve and from serving in the militia or local militia of any county, town, parish, or place in any part of the United Kingdom.

X. And be it further enacted, That every person who shall produce any false or untrue certificate or paper, as and for a true certificate of his having made and taken the Oaths and subscribed the Declaration by this Act required, for the purpose of claiming any exemption from civil or military duties as aforesaid, under the provisions of this or any other Act or Acts of Parliament, shall forfeit for every such offence the sum of fifty pounds; which penalty may be recovered by and to the use of any person who will sue for the same, by an Action of Debt, Bill, Plaint, or Information, in any of His Majesty's Courts of Record at Westminister, or the Courts of Great Sessions in Wales, or the Courts of the counties palatine of Chester, Lancaster, and Durham (as the case shall require;) wherein no Ensign, Privilege, Protection, or Wager of Law, or more than one Imparlance, shall be allowed.

XI. And be it further enacted, That no meeting, assembly, or congregaton of persons for religious worship, shall be had in any place with the door locked, bolted, or barred, or otherwise fastened, so as to prevent any person entering therein during the time of any such meeting, assembly, or congregation; and the person teaching or preaching at such meeting, assembly, or congregation, shall forfeit, for every time any such meeting, assembly, or congregation shall be held with the door locked, bolted or barred, or otherwise fastened as aforesaid, any sum not exceeding twenty pounds, nor less than forty shillings, at the discretion of the Justices convicting for such offence.

XII. And be it further enacted, That if any person or persons, at any time after the passing of this Act, do, and shall wilfully and maliciously, or contemptuously disquiet or disturb any meeting, assembly, or congregation of persons assembled for religious worship, permitted or authorized by this Act, or any former Act or Acts of Parliament, or shall in any way disturb, molest, or misuse any preacher, teacher, or person officiating at such meeting, assembly, or congregation, or any person or persons there assembled, such person or persons so offending, upon proof thereof before any Justice of the Peace by two or more credible witnesses, shall find two sureties to be bound by recognizances in the penal sum of fifty pounds to answer for such offence, and in default of such sureties shall be committed to prison, there to remain till the next General or Quarter Sessions; and upon conviction of the said offence at the said General or Quarter Sessions, shall suffer the pain and penalty of forty pounds.

XIII. Provided always, and be it further enacted, that nothing in this act contained shall affect, or be construed to affect the celebration of divine service, according to the rites and ceremonies of the united church of England and Ireland, by ministers of the said church, in any place hitherto used for such purpose, or being now or hereafter duly consecrated or licensed by any Archbishop or Bishop, or other person lawfully authorized to consecrate or license the same, or to affect the Jurisdiction of the Archbishops or Bishops, or other

persons exercising lawful authority in the Church of the United Kingdom, over the said Church, according to the Rules and discipline of the same, and to the Laws and Statutes of the Realm; but such jurisdiction shall remain and continue as if this Act had not passed.

XIV. Provided also, and be it further enacted, That nothing in this Act contained shall extend or be construed to extend to the People usually called Quakers, nor to any Meetings or Assemblies for Religious Worship, held or convened by such persons; or in any manner to alter, or repeal or affect any Act other than and except the Acts passed in the reign of King Charles the Second herein before repealed, relating to the people called Quakers, or relating to any assemblies or meeting for religious worship held by them.

XV. And be it further enacted, That every person guilty of any offence, for which any pecuniary penalty or forfeiture is imposed by this Act, in respect of which no special provision is made, shall and may be convicted thereof by information upon the oath of any one or more credible witness or witnesses, before any two or more Justices of the Peace acting in and for the county, riding, city or place wherein such offence shall be committed; and that all and every the pecuniary penalties or forfeitures which shall be incurred or become payable for any offence or offences against this Act, shall and may be levied by distress under the hand and seal or hands and seals of two Justices of the Peace for the county, riding, city, or place, in which any such offence or offences was or were committed, or where the forfeiture, or forfeitures was or were incurred, and shall when levied be paid one moiety to the informer, and the other moiety to the poor of the parish in which the offence was committed; and in case of no sufficient distress whereby to levy the penalties, or any or either of them imposed by this Act, it shall and may be lawful for any such Justices respectively before whom the offender or offenders shall be convicted, to commit such offender to prison, for such time not exceeding three months, as the said Justices in their discretion shall think fit.

XVI. And be it further enacted, That in case any person or persons who shall hereafter be convicted of

any of the offences punishable by this Act, shall conceive him, her or themselves to be aggrieved by such conviction, then and in every such case it shall and may be lawful for such person or persons respectively, and and he, she, or they, shall or may appeal to the General or Quarter Sessions of the Peace holden next after such conviction in and for the county, riding, city or place, giving unto the Justices before whom such conviction shall be made, notice in writing within eight days after any such conviction, of his, her, or their intention to prefer such Appeal; and the said Justices in their said General or Quarter Sessions shall and may, and they are hereby authorized and empowered to proceed to the hearing and determination of the matter of such Appeal, and to make such order therein, and to award such costs to be paid by and to either party, not exceeding forty shillings, as they in their discretion shall think fit.

XVII. And be it further enacted, that no penalty or forfeiture shall be recoverable under this Act, unless the same shall be sued for, or the offence in respect of which the same is imposed, is prosecuted before the Justices of Peace or Quarter Sessions within six months after the offence shall have been committed; and no person who shall suffer any imprisonment for non payment of any penalty, shall thereafter be liable to the payment of such penalty or forfeiture.

XVIII. And be it further enacted, That if any Action or Suit shall be brought or commenced against any person or persons for any thing done in pursuance of this Act, that every such Action or Suit shall be commenced within three months next after the fact committed, and not afterwards, and shall be laid and brought in the county wherein the cause or alleged cause of Action shall have accrued, and not elsewhere; and the defendant or defendants in such Action or Suit may plead the General Issue, and give this Act and the special matter in evidence on any Trial to be had thereupon, and that the same was done in pursuance and by authority of this Act; and if it shall appear so to be done, or if any such Action or Suit shall be brought after the time so limited for bringing the same, or shall be brought in any other county, city or place, that then and in such case, the

Jury shall find for such defendant or defendants; and upon such verdict, or if the plaintiff or plaintiffs shall become nonsuited, or discontinue his, her, or their Action or Actions, or if a verdict shall pass against the plaintiff or plaintiffs, or if upon demurrer, judgment shall be given against the plaintiff or plaintiffs, the defendant or defendants shall have and may recover treble costs and have the like remedy for the same, as any defendant or defendants hath or have for costs of Suit in other cases by Law.

XIX. And be it further enacted, That this Act shall be deemed and taken to be a Public Act, and shall be judically taken notice of as such by all Judges, Justices, and others, without specially pleading the same.

FINIS.

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